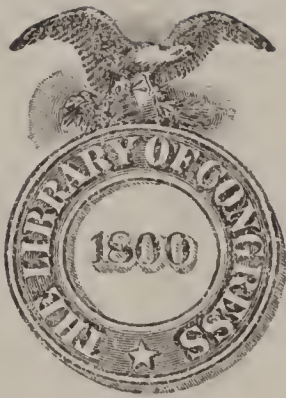


# SHEEP OF THE SHEPHERD

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Lillian A. North





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# SHEEP OF THE SHEPHERD









THE SHEEP FOLD

# SHEEP OF THE SHEPHERD

*Little Idyls of a Sheep Farm*

BY

LILLIAN A. NORTH

ILLUSTRATED BY

LORENZ C. BRAREN



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# SHEEP OF THE SHEPHERD

The AUTOCRAT, who owned the sheep, had commandeered the shepherd's own flock from a land of plenty (Goshen) to a ruined farm (Little Siberia). Their usual attendants,

MASTER, the shepherd's dog

The shepherd and shepherdess, MICHAEL  
and ELIZA

RUBE, the woodsman, and OLD EPH, the  
stable hand

went with them.





# SHEEP OF THE SHEPHERD

## CHAPTER I

### THE INSTALLATION

I TURNED in late and not without presage of trouble. Hardly separable from my first dreams there came a queer rushing sound. I sprang to the window. The cottage yard and the adjacent field were carpeted with woolly backs. They pressed close to the

house, and the leader, a tame sheep, named Gaiters, looked up at it as she uttered her plaintive note. Gaiters' attitude was an explanation. The sheep were asking Eliza to take them back to Goshen. They rushed back and forth, a ghostly army, cleaving the night silence eerily. On each return I caught with relief the familiar voice of Gaiters. So absorbing were my sensations, I had not time to wonder at the absence of the shepherd's dog, Master, ere he came bounding towards us from the pines. The dog rushed immediately to the adjacent field to cut off the sheep's avenue of escape. Eliza appeared in her well-known bonnet, grey skirt and man's coat. She had a string of lighted lanterns on her arm. She spoke to Gaiters. From Eliza's voice her heart is never absent. Her mind contained nothing but the knowledge of the flock's distress in its strange surroundings. She was heart-broken because the sheep had not even the consolation of good fodder. She feared for them the dark as they feared it.

For she had seen them start at shadows and huddle at a noise. She called their leader. The ewe ran up to her, and the harassed sheep made after their shepherdess with one accord. Old Eph and Michael made the fence secure again while the dog kept watch. Master knew what had scared the sheep, but he kept his counsel.

In every stable, shed and corner Eliza hung a beacon light which said as plainly as her presence, "Do not be afraid, for I am with you." When the shepherd came to the cottage with his morning report, Eliza's lanterns still glowed faintly in the barns.

The flock had been shorn despite the dark prophecies of Old Eph who still wore his winter overcoat. It was pasture time elsewhere, but for us the earth had yet to yean. We felt as shepherds when they wait for the young of the ewe which expects the storm.

Little Siberia was a wild hilly stretch in northern New Jersey, on the northwest border of the Autocrat's domain. The dark woods

that shut it out from the warmth of the south and east exposed it to the bitter misery of the northwest wind. The hardy violet there was rare, the useful plantain, timid pioneer, waited for our footsteps. Patches of blueberry attested the soil's poverty unashamed. There flourished the funereal cedar, the scrub oak, the birch and poplar. Under our feet roots of sweet fern and sumac lay thick, interwoven. Cat briar and poverty grass revelled on what acid life was left. Little Siberia was accursed, and Michael's flock was sent to take its curse away.

They clung to shelter until hunger drove them afield. We led them up to Rube's clearings. We took them through woodlands infested with hydatids and parasites. They stooped to the wild strawberry and the sprouting golden rod. They threshed out the fragrance of the inedible pine weed and pennyroyal. They reached despairingly for the tonic of the wild cherry. At noon the same sun shone upon them that shone on Goshen—



the Goshen they had caused to blossom as the rose.

There was a wise old ewe, named Chrissy, who never went to pasture. She encouraged others to follow her example. The shepherd, having learned his sheep wisdom from the sheep themselves, would not force them. Rube trimmed for them the roadside hedges and threw the brush inside. That, at least, was nourished by the dung of the passing horse. The old ewe and her little circle made the best of Rube's contribution. Chrissy caught a stray apple now and then from some dying trees, and snatched Master's crust when nothing better offered. The ewe and her companions ate their oat straw night and morning with the flock and escaped the dread diseases in the sour vegetation.

A six-month lamb, named Eve, was the first to fail. She isolated herself and took salt and water desperately. There appeared under her chin a bladder-like pouch fluctuating in size and fullness. She lingered for a week,

disconsolate, without appetite, burning and shivering with fever, always standing. Her little weary legs only gave way at the last gasp. Eve was spared experimental remedies, but after death the shepherd examined her body to try to fathom the new and distressing conditions among his flock.

It became a common thing for sheep to be missing from the fold at dusk. Their homecoming was pitiful. With full stomachs that always burdened and never gave them strength, they would lie down insensible to the urging nose and entreating paw of the anxious dog.

The season of drought came. The birch leaves were covered with aphides. The gadfly was at his wicked work. The beautiful sheep month of September was lost in continual gusts of dry tempest. On the edge of these storms, sheep would drop overwhelmed. Some we had to raise. Others staggered to their feet like drunken men. A few stood up with their heads askew. Among these unfor-

tunate was the Babe. She was a pet of mine, the first lamb born at Goshen.

We had an improvised hospital on the sunny floor of the old barn. Here Master, despite his numerous duties, seemed to preside untiringly. Here numbers of young sheep, bloodless from the combined effect of drug and disease, gratefully hugged the warmth. Under their jaws were inserted quills from which dripped continually the wicked serum which Michael called Red Water. Eve had not died for naught. This outer flow was weakening, to be sure, but death could only be defeated by turning its course away from the lung cavity. Even the listless creeping back to life of these convalescents was something to be thankful for.

In a sunny pen lay Chamomile, the shepherd's Shropshire ewe. She had been silent for days. There is no greater sign of sheep suffering. Master was hovering near when Chamomile got to her feet, shook herself weakly and poked her hot nose at him through

the hurdle. The dog bounded off for the shepherd. Michael, coming in, heard the ewe's address to her flock, and made such haste that the sheep all jumped away from him. For the shepherd knew that the cry of a sheep to its flock at the turn of illness is often its farewell. But Chamomile was better and asked for food. She was given the flour of the oats, mixed with milk, the gruel of the flaxseed and steamed clover heads. The proceeds of some birch cut by Rube had bought food for Little Siberia's invalids.

Chamomile made a good fight for life and won. I nursed the Babe myself; Master danced devoted attendance on me. We gave her delicacies. Her appetite was fickle. She was always trying to straighten her little twisted head and resenting the fact that her efforts were useless. She sighed and moped under my assiduous care for weeks. One morning I caught her trembling as if with ague, and discovered that the wool on her



belly and flank was loosening. I went to the shepherd for advice.

"The worry of the gadfly has affected her liver," he said. "She wants more than tender nursing, acushla. She wants relief from suffering. It would be a kindness to end her life."

"At once, then, Michael," I gasped and left her in his gentle hands.

As the lambing season drew near, it was found that the wool of the flock was sadly impoverished. All the long summer Nature's own good gift to them, the blessed grass, had been denied. Rube was instructed to pile all his unsaleable birch in stacks tall enough to shelter the home fold from the bitterest winds. These forts were scarcely completed when the bleat of the first new lamb was heard in the sheep yard.

Eliza and her faithful aid, Master, soon had work to do among the backward young. Motherhood has no charm for young and

ill-nurtured ewes. Dark Features insisted on bringing her hind foot down on the neck of the little suppliant for her milk. Eliza captured the foot gently while Master encouraged the lamb to suck by licking its tail, which is what the good sheep mothers do. The great twin-bearer, Mallard, would not know her second son that year. She swung up and down like a moored boat whenever her last born tried to catch the nipple. Eliza backed the dam into a corner and Master bumped the little hungry one up to the milk, which is what good sheep mothers ought to do.

A well-conditioned flock will feed upon itself for one generation. The last months at Goshen nurtured the first bonny lambs who preened themselves on the southern slope of Little Siberia's sheep yard. When they could eat, they had no care or want. Bountiful supplies came in for them. The Autocrat did not begrudge the early lamb its few short weeks of thriving.

When first these little ones were turned out to play, grown sheep forgot their age. Soft, fleecy, bouncing balls, they curved the neck, they grouped the feet, leapt, paused in air, and dropped to earth a featherweight. This was Master's joy and recreation. He never tired of watching them at play. He stood among them cheering. He romped with them. He ran races. But when the first one showed signs of weariness, he lay down and made a cushion for its chin.

The sheep no longer begged for Goshen. Winter was upon them and the cares of motherhood. Any shelter meant security. There were well dams, there were well little ones, despite the inhospitality of Little Siberia. But many a ewe gave her strength to her created young and had not vigor left to nurse it. Only Eliza could draw their milk with her gentle fingers. Her modest demands were dictated by a scrupulous wisdom they could not expect from their hungry lambs. So the shepherdess fed them what milk their mothers

made, and Blossie, the shepherd's cow, supplied the lack. Many a ewe brought forth a lamb at peace. Many a ewe labored with shapes that Old Eph buried. This imperfection troubled the shepherd's heart sorely. The tragedy of its waste sat heavily on us all.

The Autocrat came down in his tandem cart at the end of the winter. He culled all the mothers who did not suckle young.







## CHAPTER II

### ROBIN

SUMMER at Little Siberia still meant pain to the flock and care to the shepherds. Every morning during the hot weather Eliza brushed the noses of the sheep with pine tar to keep off the gadfly. Old Eph put around a plentiful supply of sulphur and salt, and Michael himself drew down burlaps over the southern and eastern exposures.

But a lamb had been born to the Hampshire ewe, Calamus, whose splendid hardy perfection encouraged the shepherds. We had

cheerfully named the newcomer, Robin. She escaped all baby ailments and grew up to fine stature with the nonchalance she betrayed at suckling time. Hampshire babies are always satisfied.

Robin was now six months old. Her good carriage and her lack of haste bespoke a strength her brothers and sisters did not care to gauge. So her place at the feed trough was assured. The little ewe's tending had been the tending of the least needy in the flock. She therefore missed the humanizing element that surrounded weaker lambs. Her powers of observation, instead of centering upon the shepherds, were bent upon the shepherd's dog, Master. Robin was born with a consuming desire for exercise. At two weeks old she emerged from a creep hole in her pen and bounced up and down the aisle to entice the dog. At six weeks she converted the home fold into a circus. She outdid all other lambs at play, but her chief delight was to run close races with Master. When he reached the

goal ahead of her, as he always did, she ran at him with her woolly head. In his way the dog was as handsome as the lamb. If her lashes were long and sweeping, so were his. If her eyes were beautiful, his were wise with the beauty of generations of his kind. If her fleece was gold and white, his was silver with breast and collar of snow. If her hoofs were neat and black, his downy toes were washed spotless in the brook. But for Robin's magnificent long tail Master had no counterpart. He, like the mother and sisters and brothers of his race, was born tailless.

One shadowy spring night the sheep had a scare. Its cause, though unknown to the shepherds, was enough to make the flock break and to send Master bounding away in the direction of the pines. Little Robin followed him. She thumped the ground like a rabbit behind him, but with all fours. She trotted, but was forced to gallop at last to keep her leader in sight. This race was not like the races of old. This way was long and rough,

and the feathery end of her tail hampered her by catching the briars. The dog, though aware of her company, accomplished what he set out to do. But he met her on his return and mercifully slackened his pace all the way back to the fold.

Robin hated, like many another lamb, to have her nose painted. But she did more. Every morning she took pains to rub the tar off on the fleece of her quiet mother. She was grazing one sultry afternoon, thus rid of her protection, when the inevitable gadfly assailed her. Robin ran home and for the first time in her gay life lay down and cried. The remedies were as usual applied too late.

Though the little sheep apparently recovered and resumed her wonted ways, the shepherd Michael was watchful. In the warm days at the close of the following winter, he would listen anxiously for Robin's sneeze. It was violent enough to make her nose bleed. Eliza, the shepherdess, then gave her snuff, and Michael blew tobacco smoke up her nos-



trils. They succeeded at last in dislodging the grubs. But little Robin never felt quite the same. She was subject to strange sensations caused by the work of the grubs on the cellular walls of the brain. At such times she knew no better outlet for her feelings than her old pastime of running.

Night scares at Little Siberia were common, but none could foresee the one that came in broad day. The flock was still in its winter quarters. The snow was on the ground. A starved-looking female hound walked into the fold. The old sheep, well filled and content, stood ere they ran. The younger ones broke, and with them, Robin. She felt pain in her head. Her brain seemed awry. Master had in a trice headed the stranger back to the pine woods. He knew well enough whence she came. Robin forsook the staid paths of coming maternity and followed the dogs.

Eliza waited. She knew that Master would bring his sheep home. But the shepherdess was anxious because Robin was no longer a

lamb. The dog and his companion were sighted at last. Both were coming back slowly with lowered heads.

The ewe was placed in a pen. She could not see over the tall imprisoning hurdles. Life had become a bad dream. When her head did not ache her body did. She could not stand with ease. She could not lie without pain. Ill had also befallen Master. He was making the night grewsome with his howls. But Robin did not know that Michael's heart was broken. The shepherd's dog, the gentlest and most faithful of his royal kind, was dying in prolonged agony through the petty spite and envy of a boor beyond the pines.

With daylight Robin felt a little better. She was allowed to take drink and exercise in the yard. There she saw Master. She had missed his coming and going as other members of the flock would miss their shepherd. She ran up to him. The dog did not seem to recognize the companion of his ill-fated journeys. He sprang at her throat. Robin

jumped back. In her helpless horror she was cast upon her back. When Eliza came up to rescue her, she had rolled over and fainted. The shepherdess kept a guarded space around the ewe, and when nature recovered her placed her once more in her pen. There the sheep went through the remainder of her trial.

Robin stood gazing with wonder at two tiny lambs. She nosed them fearfully. They were quite still. Old Eph came in. He took the twins away, and just then Master bounded over the hurdle that separated her from the flock. With the tongue that had been all but ready for her offspring the poor sheep licked the dog's face. He returned her caress and lay down. Robin scratched him with her foot. Her orphaned heart was yearning now for responsive company. But like the lambs, Master slept. The marvel of his peace crept on her then. She tucked herself up beside him and for the first time in two pain-filled days she quietly ruminated. They lay together undisturbed for hours. At dawn there

came a sound like the northeast wind in the three locked chestnuts behind the barn, only this sound was close beside her. It was the passing of Master. When the shepherd removed the dead body of his dog, Robin became again conscious of her wounded brain, but beside the hurt of the gadfly she nursed a greater. Her babies were dead. The dog was gone. So Robin ran no more. She only mourned.

The Autocrat came down in his tandem cart when Master was under ground. "Poisoned? We must look into that. But the ewe—better kill her. She might mother run-aways."







### CHAPTER III

#### ELIZA'S ANGEL

AS the shepherd's dog, Master, breathed his last, a lamb was born. It was a tiny premature thing to take a hold on life—a sort of grieving souvenir from the flock.

In compensation for its lack of size, the Great Artist had done its face in velvety blacks and whites, painted its eyes a violet blue, and shaped its fleecy form with the lines of beauty.

Eliza took a great liking to this lamb. She called him fondly her angel. But as this name was subject to ridicule among the retainers of Little Siberia, she appealed to me for another. I could think of none but Gabriel.

This was soon changed to Gabby. For this deflection Old Eph was responsible. He came once a day to clean up the pen where Gabby and his mother lived. The lamb would often help himself from the old man's pail of lime. "That there Gabby lamb'll make himself sick if he don't keep his nose out o' my lime bucket," he asserted gravely. Eliza told him to keep his pail away; for after one of Eph's visits Gabby had sneezed and cried with an abandon that seemed too much for his slight frame. But Michael the shepherd only smiled. He knew that lime made a fine snuff and a good antacid.

It was not till Gabby had outgrown his first infant plaint that we found out how patient he was. His poor mother's milk supply was not of the best. This fact seemed to enhance

the lamb's wonderful sweetness. His eager little hum was pleasant music in a sheep yard where many hungry ones were blaring to be served.

Little Gabby retained all his beauty while his dam loved him. But when she took to hiding in corners and asking Eliza not to discover her to her son, the lamb's appearance gradually underwent a change. And this desertion of Gabby's mother was when he was only six weeks old. But he always loved her. He would often hunt her up and range himself beside her, taking no further liberty than the solace of her company.

The fact that his mother thought him too big to nurse altered the complexion of his daily life in many ways. There was no longer anyone to fight for him. He became the butt of the bossy flock because he never hit back. The other lambs knocked him away from his food. He accepted the situation, seeking some ewe with a satisfied appetite and curling himself up against her. At such times he

was not only patient but blessed with a rare content. Did not Blossie, the good shepherd's cow, live only for fortunate lambs like him? He knew that his shepherdess would come and lift him above the press of the flock. He knew she would find some safe corner to feed him in.

Despite this extra nourishment, at three months little Gabby's flanks were sunken and his tail thin. His skin was pearly white and his wool dry and harsh. "He is going wrong," said the shepherd. "There is another debt charged up to Little Siberia."

The lamb did not thrive, but he could eat and take a bright interest in his surroundings. In the odd sweet moments that she snatched for him, Eliza would take him in her lap. There, with his legs doubled neatly under him, Gabby would lift his little head as if proud of the distinction. It took him but a moment to find his cud and chew with the same vigor as any healthy member of the flock. It was like a glimpse of a better world



to watch the meditative beauty of his little face.

But while others thrived Gabby grew paler and more emaciated. His brow puckered. I saw the lines of care beneath the wool.

Gabby was dying, but since he was so pathetic, it would be nearer the truth to say that he was living of some strange sheep disease whose diagnosis could only be reached by dissolution. He seemed to feel no pain, but he was sensitive to the contempt of the bossy flock that he loved as he did Eliza and his dam.

Kiddy, the delicious squinting Kiddy whose under-fleece was yellow as gold and who teemed with fat and prosperity, was yet especially jealous of little Gabby. When the shepherdess set him down all sleepy and off guard, Kiddy invariably ran at him and bucked him soundly in the ribs. Eliza, flying to his protection, could have cried over that little mysterious unwell belly which, though filled so well, yet served the lamb so ill. But by the

time she reached him, Gabby had squared himself, shaken out his wool and met her with a brave preening of his little head and neck.

There came a time when Gabby ate obediently rather than eagerly, and his food seemed to stimulate him but temporarily. But he never failed to eat with Eliza standing by. Many an extra ration of clover and bran did she filch for him. And she loved him the more because she felt certain of his condemnation.

The shepherd once told me that the gates of the sheep's better world were always wide. Doubtless little Gabby knew this. When Eliza went to him for the last time, he set his legs apart, shook his fleece in order and stood at attention, looking up into her face as if to say, "Yes, Eliza. I am ready." "Dear little Gabby," she answered, "will you come out to die?" The lamb followed her unflinchingly into strange dark quarters. He looked and saw Michael, his own shepherd, his own good kind shepherd.



As Eliza walked uncertainly away the Autocrat was crying, "Where are the pets? If you would not make pets, I could tell culls at a glance." But, as Eliza said, you couldn't help making pets of the ailing. The culls were always the darlings.

They held an autopsy over little Gabby. No disease could they find. His lungs were free, his liver clean. No ugly parasite marred his bowels. His body was as sweet as his life had been. Only the same signs of patience and emaciation were there, conditions inalienable to his soil.

The Autocrat gave up the case. Gabby's mother was offered up for the welfare of the flock.



## CHAPTER IV

### SICOMAC

LITTLE Annie's lamb had been too busy drinking to speak, but when she saw Eliza she left the milk, backed up into a corner and looked up with bright wary eyes. The shepherdess, seeing that the lamb had no need of her, fed the mother and left them.

Indian names had come into use among the flock, so we called this little member Sicomac. She grew round and fat, but was still shy and

dirty. Some mothers wash the fleece of their young. Little Annie gave her lamb plenty of milk and thought her duty done. "When the lamb is less scared, we will run them both into a clean pen," said the shepherdess. And the baby's grooming was left to the friction of the straw she lay upon.

Sicomac's face was brown and her ears grew spots instead of wool. Her flexible back was too round for a shepherd's praise, but her slender legs had the correct outward turn and carried her splendidly. Her yellow greasy fleece left nothing to be desired.

Sicomac was not a yearling when the indication of her small pointed ears, held always at an angle of forty-five degrees, developed. She established her own place and held it. She was first at the food, the salt and the water. The precedence of age, which had always counted among Michael's flock, mattered not a jot to the newcomer. She had acquired the habit of being dainty and discriminating with her food, and while this made a good sheep

of Sicomac it was most unfortunate for her victims. Sicomac tasted at everybody's plate. Her onslaughts were as sudden, fierce and unaccountable as a young ram's fight with his brother. The sheep fled at her approach. If one resisted, she would shove it from behind with her chin and shoulders, uttering a grunt like that of the great ram in the seasons when he had no love or tenderness for his ewes. Occasionally an old ewe objected to this dominant youngster. Sicomac jumped on her back and rode her out of the fold. Once, only once, this unseemly behavior brought about a fight. Sicomac was a small sheep, but the odds were awful. She fought head to head with her opponent until she beat her, and then turning round gave her a final rush that sent the poor victim on her knees with her nose in the mud.

Eliza had no great cause to love Sicomac, and the little ewe, aggressive though she was with sheep, clung to her shy exclusive manners with human kind. She was least afraid of the shepherd, and it is certain that though



she amused, she could not anger him. She would look up into his face with her brown faun-like eyes and permit his hand to touch her head just once. But she did not care for a second caress. As for Old Eph, Sicomac simply stared at him as she stared at the flock.

Sicomac bustled in and out the sheep sheds. Inside she looked for remnants from the special feeding of invalids. She ate these stray findings in the doorway. The home pasture was an old orchard. Sicomac ate with her ear alert not to miss the fall of an apple. When more than one fell she would run quickly from one to the other, steadying and breaking them with a strong upward movement of her lower jaw. This was all that was necessary to corner them all. Sheep do not like to eat anything tainted with another's saliva. On still days and when the wind was in the east, Sicomac heard falling apples three fields away, trotted down home to find them and ate them on her way back. Karl was with us from

Goshen. His oxen were plowing on the home pasture, and many of the flock were walking and smelling in his trenches. But Sicomac was too busy to heed this. It was September but the refreshing hope of it had been sucked up by August's heat and temper. Sicomac was not oppressed. Tempest threatened. Sicomac had no fear. The flies were so thick that a little lamb buried her nose in Eliza's skirt and cried. Sicomac, from where she stood under the best apple tree, looked on her with disdain. She had rubbed all the protective tar off her own little brown muzzle by her untiring industry. All at once Sicomac snorted and rubbed her nose on the ground. Something terrible had happened to her. She might have fallen in her dismay. But that was not Sicomac's way. She reeled her way indoors, and Eliza found her spinning round and round on the barn floor. "Bab bab," cried Sicomac in defiance of her own helplessness. "Bab ba-ab," she shouted, staggering like one drunk. "Bab bab!" Eliza feared



she would be heard for miles. Any victim of the fly may stagger or fall, but few cry. Sicomac shouted and shouted again, tempestuously struggling to gain the mastery over her whirling brain. Meanwhile Eliza applied the poisoned sponge and the atomizer, cooing in her sympathetic voice to still her patient. But the shepherdess did not know what Sicomac knew,—that the fly's eggs were breathed up beyond reach in the reflex of the little sheep's first snort.

Sicomac was conquered by a fly. She realized at last that no fighting could retract the inevitable disaster, and looking up into Eliza's face with her big shy eyes she permitted the shepherdess to bolster her unsteady figure. She took the cooling medicine with docility and the next morning seemed herself again. But there were two differences. Sicomac never cried again: she always shouted. And she came to the call of the shepherdess, no longer resisting her touch. She would even abandon her thievery if Eliza held up a finger.

One day Old Eph left his work to come to the cottage. "That there Christian Science sheep," he said, "has stolen Dainty Foot's turnips and is running all round the yard with the bucket."

When Eliza arrived on the scene Sicomac still had the tub grasped tight between her teeth and strong upper jaw and was carrying a quart of cut turnips about in search of a quiet spot to eat them in. This was the first time the sheep applied strategem when force became useless. It was not the last. Eliza scolded very gently, for although Sicomac did not hold her head askew as did most of her fellow victims, her passions were always on the surface.

The following Christmas Sicomac was heard to shout, "Bab bab!" Eliza hastened to that cry, as what shepherdess would not. In a corner of the big barn floor, in a cold draught, lay a little wet premature thing of skin and bone, scarcely a lamb. Its forehead was bare and its ears were naked. The gadfly

and Little Siberia had worked their will on Sicomac's first offspring. Every sheep had been cleared from the floor by the aggressive young mother. She was gazing at her first-born in her birdlike questioning way, half shy of it, not knowing what to do. Eliza picked up the lamb carefully, chafed its feet and carried it away to a warm straw-covered pen. At her loss Sicomac's instinct awoke. "Bab bab," she shouted looking around her wildly. Eliza, with her arm about the ewe's neck, guided her into the pen with the lamb and left her some clover hay to dissect.

Sicomac's first baby was called Little Dick. He taught his mother to understand his need. He was very small and had the startled look of his dam. It was the look of a thing at bay. It pained us, reproduced thus in two successive generations. Little Annie had once been chased by boys. The grandmother had forgotten, but the Great Mother made both Sicomac and Little Dick remember.

Despite his poor start Little Dick did well.

He put on flesh at a rate that did credit to his mother's nursing and the shepherd's reputation. For the time being the passionate sheep found vent for her hurt in her devotion to her lamb, but when in the course of a few weeks he was taken away from her she would not be consoled. "Bab bab," she shouted all day, and "Bab ba-ab," she sobbed all night. She trotted blindly about seeking him. She stood outside the fold for hours in the rain asking Eliza to rescue Little Dick from the wet and the cold. Her steady grief revived the complaints of other childless mothers. The chorus was pitiful. "It is useless to bring her in until she has worn out her grief in her own way," Eliza said to me. At last Sicomac, fortunately or unfortunately, trod on the point of a rusty nail. Lamé and drenched she gave herself up to the shepherdess. Eliza drew the nail and treated the little hoof with hot water and an antiseptic. Eliza wiped the surface water from the woolly coat, relieved the hot udder and lulled her patient into tired peace.



For many days after Sicomac was so hoarse that her voice could not be heard.

But Sicomac's reputation did not rest on her individual peculiarities alone. They were as nought to the fact that she had a Christmas lamb, that it was ready for market in six weeks, and that she grew more wool than any other sheep of her size. The Autocrat once said that Sicomac would thrive where other sheep would starve. The irony of this remark lasted Old Eph for weeks.

Sicomac never made a sheep companion or friend. She clung to her lambs, and she was the only sheep in Michael's flock who deliberately chose her mate, and then made him aware of her favor by running at him like a ram. But what she lacked in society she gained in other ways. Her attitude toward all the good things of life was understood by the flock and acknowledged tacitly by her shepherds. The Autocrat came down to see her once a year and on his last visit he had said, "Keep her ram lambs."





## CHAPTER V

### EWEY LAMB

A TERRIER dog had broken into the grazing fold. The old Cheviot wether kept running back and forth with his head aloft. Billy, the ram, had disappeared. It was Ewey Lamb who covered his retreat by stamping her foot at the dog. But although too wise to encourage a dog chase herself, she was not too foolish to seize the opportunity afforded her by the appearance of the dog's owner from over the hedge.

When Ewey left the field at a sharp trot, the wether followed with his head still held by an invisible check string. But Billy, the Autocrat's fine Southdown ram, could not be found. He was a youngster and a pet. The ewe had accustomed him to the cottage door, and she now kept running to it and looking at us as if we held the secret of Billy's whereabouts. Looks proving of no avail she cried aloud, "M-m-ma—a-a!" At that Billy spoke up in his unsettled tenor. Ewey responded, "M-m-m-m——m!" to tell him that all was well, and he crept out from under the back stoop.

He was a cowardly object to call a ram, and the dusty cobwebs and dead leaves caught by his fleece did not assist his front. The shepherd laughed at his sagacity, but he laid his hand on Ewey's head and said, "She is better than a dog." The ewe did not understand Michael's English, but she absorbed the praise and her mother heart was satisfied.

Ewey, or Ewey Lamb as we more often

called her in her youth, was one of three sheep the Autocrat bought and placed with Little Siberia's flock. Billy was the purpose of this purchase. The wether was his companion. For some time after this little group kept to themselves. The male sheep had catarrh. Ewey developed a tendency to sore mouth. But fine female that she was, her own pain never mattered. She piloted Billy and the Cheviot whenever they went abroad. She frequented the sunniest and most trodden spots. She hunted out the plantain and the dandelion. She nipped the brush that had been cropped before. She culled the tall June daisies. When she looked to reassure herself of the safety of her companions, the sun discovered the velvet black and white of her face, the dark blue of her eye. When Billy and the wether wandered too far away, she cheerfully left her own selected pasture and picked her dainty way to join them.

Billy became one of the parents of the flock. He was always a baby. Ewey looked after

him until she became engrossed in the cares of motherhood. Billy was then thrown back upon the society of the wether. The Cheviot could not protect him as the ewe had done. He was but a fond foolish old sheep doing his best to make wool and mutton. But he loved the ram, and Ewey had taught him how to put up with Billy's uncertain humors and play target sweetly, and he was faithful to her example to the end of his days.

Ewey had twin lambs. One was a little Billy, the other a ewe like herself. She fussed over them like a busy hen. She fed them often. She taught them good healthy hardy habits. When they were but four days old, they straddled their ungainly legs beside her in the snow, while she dipped for mouthfuls of its frozen purity and raised her head to look around alertly as she ate.

The ewe never made her health a source of concern to the shepherds. She had cured her mouth with herbs. She escaped the gad-fly. She bore whatever pain was hers without



betrayal. Her lambs did well. But her mother heart could not wean them. The appeal of her worn devoted figure in the spring of the year forced the shepherd to remove her progeny to a distant part of the fold. The ewe mourned, but in the course of a few days was again seen in the company of her old chums.

When, therefore, Billy, the ram, and the old Cheviot wether took their last journey by the certain road that Michael's flock always traveled, the ewe, having revived her old friendship with them, went about wondering and distressed.

"She must have something to mother," said the shepherdess. "She will take to the flock now."

Eliza's surmise proved a correct one. Ewey became the leader of hundreds and retained that post until she died. She encouraged them in safe paths. She meekly shared with them her all. She never fought. She did not give way to anger. She had no passion



but to nurse or to protect. But she did not fear to stamp her foot in the face of danger that they might be warned.

Each year the old ewe, as she now came to be called, bore twins—always a ram and ewe. Mothering came to be her pain, but it was also her reward. She would talk to her young hours before they were born. “M-m-m—m! M-m-m—m!” she hummed in greeting, often deceiving the shepherdess.

Ewey was the idol of the farm hands. Rube, the woodman, always had an apple for her. She could take it from his pocket. Old Eph gave her sugar, and she would dance up to Karl, the plowman, at his lunch in expectation of a crust. One morning the shepherd saw Old Eph giving the ewe a handful of corn he was throwing to the chickens, and he warned him that he was taking a great risk with the sheep’s digestive system. Oats, he held, was the only grain fit for bearing ewes.

But to feed Ewey had already become a custom. She looked for it. The fascination

of her ready greeting, her searching nose, her eager murmur were too great to be entirely foregone.

The shepherd's inference became truth. Ewey had acute indigestion. Her appetite became depraved in her effort to help herself. She ate wood, soil, the dung of the pigeons. She was again heavy in lamb. For her the periods between nursing the old babies and welcoming the new were always too short. The shepherd feared to deplete her strength with saline medicine. She was given her tonic in oil.

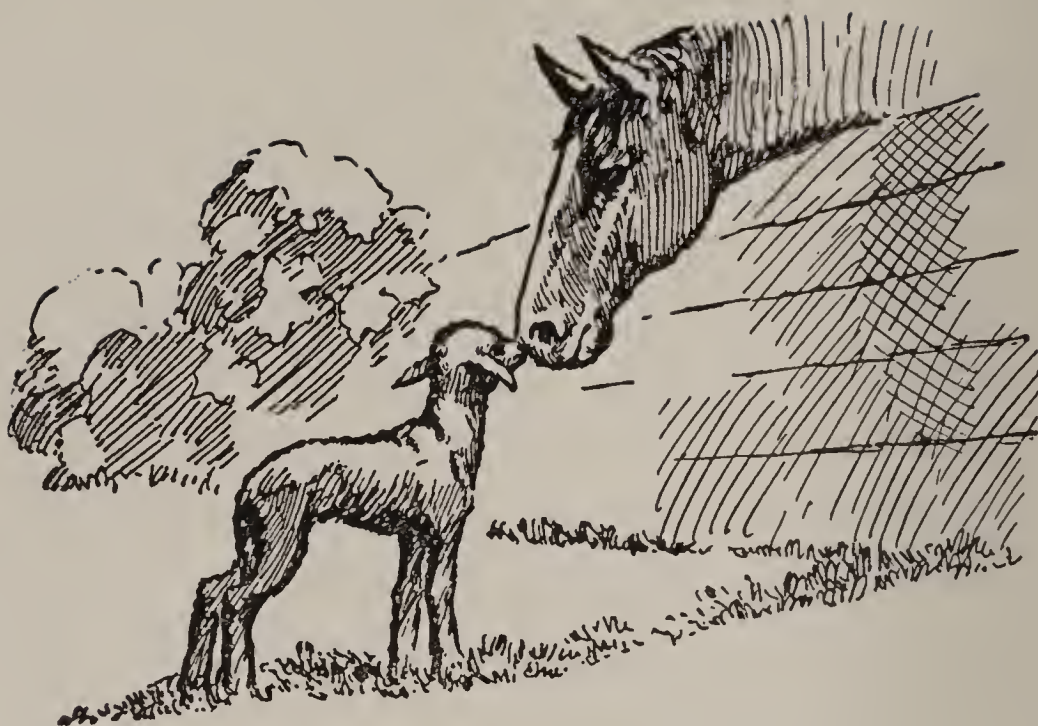
A few days before her lambs were expected, Ewey had an attack of what is known in shepherdry as parturient apoplexy. Her strength was wasted in cruel useless paroxysms. When they were at last subdued with opiates Ewey lay helpless. Twice each day, and twice in the night, her faithful nurses gently turned her on her side. She sucked her flaxseed gruel every hour so obediently that Eliza hoped for

her recovery. But these sweet deceits had their source only in her eager gratitude.

“Ma-a-a!” The cry was faint. It was addressed to the flock from their gentle leader. It was her good-bye. She asked their forgiveness for her desertion.

“M-m-m-m——m!” It was the last apology of love. The syncopated bleat of twin lambs protested. But the old ewe’s jaw had dropped. Eliza gathered the orphans fondly in her arms. Michael stood soberly looking for the immediate cause of death. A rosy froth at Ewey’s nostrils explained the final hemorrhage.

“She has been kept just one year too long,” said the Autocrat. “The ewe’s period of usefulness ended last spring. Bring on the twins for market.”



## CHAPTER VI

### BUMPY

GOSHEN had for generations sent sheep to the cattle fairs. The great Priscilla strain was well known to shepherds. Priscillas always bore twin lambs of diverse sex. The little brothers of the Little Priscillas were thus born prematurely, and being the sons of sires whose identity was new each year were scarce worth notice. But a glance could not distinguish a mother Priscilla from a daughter Priscilla



after they had been shorn. The buck twin was invariably made a wether. The ewe twin went with her mother to the cattle show.

In Goshen the Priscilla young were born at Christmas, but when the flock was removed to Little Siberia the last Priscilla did not yean till springtime. The shepherd for this and other reasons advised the Autocrat to omit his Priscilla exhibit for the year. But the precedent of the flock's owner could not be broken. Priscilla and the Little Priscilla went away with Eliza, the shepherdess. Bumpy, the little brother, was left alone.

At the time of Bumpy's birth, he was even less developed than his brothers of seasons gone. He was many hours learning to stand. His sister alone benefited by the extra nutrition in the first milk of the mother. Bumpy didn't care. To be close to his own was all he desired for days, and by the time he grew really hungry he had learnt, through the kind offices of Eliza, to dive and catch his even share simultaneously with his clever sister.



Bumpy was a late lamb, and owing to his early advent into life, his hospital experience was delayed. This crowded the making of the wether lamb and the departure of his mother and sister into the space of two weeks. When they left him, Bumpy was still in the dark stable where he had been put with his dam and twin that he might not retard his healing by undue exercise.

The shepherd heard with anxiety Bumpy's loud and vehement protest against his desertion. The lamb had a fine resonant voice whose quality and strength was some comfort to the listener. But the incessant crying of his patient troubled Michael. Bumpy could never feel the disturbing passions of a ram, but it required a greater skill than the shepherd's to render him content without a mother. When Bumpy had cried for a day and night, his beautiful voice was broken. His note sounded as flat as the note of a cracked fiddle. The shepherd knew he had been weaned too early, and took care to instruct Eliza's substi-

tute to give Bumpy cow's milk three times a day. But Bumpy repudiated both Blossie's contribution and the woman who forced it on him. The incapable attendant, discouraged with her ill success, left the lamb to his fate. He bleated only little heart-broken sobs now, nibbled his hay and licked his salt. But the water was a more comfortless substitute for his dam's milk than the cow's. He would not touch it.

In the next stall to Bumpy an old farm horse was stabled. Often had the lamb observed the head of the friendly animal as he lifted it at the coming of Old Eph. After the insincere attentions of Eliza's substitute, Bumpy watched for an opportunity of getting nearer to the horse. It came when Eph opened the door. Bumpy slid quickly in behind him. The grey like many another horse who has led a long industrious life, was troubled with indigestion, and had the habit of sampling strange materials. When he discovered little Bumpy close to his nose, he took

a bunch of wool. The lamb at once went back to his own stall, and Old Eph closed the door. Nevertheless Bumpy repeated his visit. He found it easier to give up a mouthful of wool to the horse than to take nutriment from the hand of his attendant.

It was noticed that Bumpy did not eat his hay. Old Eph said the lamb had grown fond of the horse and ate with him. Further investigation brought to light the condition of the lamb's coat and after that he was denied close association with Dobbin.

The woman attendant now forced Bumpy out to graze with other lambs. But Bumpy's physical isolation had been followed too closely by desertion to make him at home in the company of his kind. One morning when he was shoved out into the light of day he wandered into Eliza's herb garden. There he perceived a bright flower, but as he stooped to nip it the caretaker came running up and chased him back to his own quarters.

The weather grew warm and muggy. It

rained every other day and put Bumpy's attendant out of routine. Through not wishing to expose him when it was wet, she forgot to put Bumpy out when it was dry. The lamb gave her no reminder. Bumpy had cried for his mother sincerely, looked for her constantly; his sufferings now were dumb.

On Eliza's return from the fair he had become a mere wraith of a lamb. He had ceased to ruminate and consequently to eat. He could not stand. He had been struck with maggots while he lay. His only complaint was a weak little kick of protest towards his irritated pelt.

Eliza sheared away the filthy wool, and what burrowing pests remained she exterminated with diluted antiseptic. The little belly was carefully dried with hot cloths as were the new born lambs in the very coldest part of the season. The sore spots where the maggots had punctured the tender skin were soothingly dressed and Bumpy was helped to his feet in a cheerful cleanly-bedded pen. Here he was surrounded by his flock yet



fenced securely from their assaults upon his weakness. The new sense of comfort and cleanliness helped him to stand awhile. He even tried to shake out his fleece. Bran, crushed oats and milk, good diet for ailing lambs, he refused and hunted for the innutritious bits of timothy among his clover hay.

His abstraction and listlessness soon returned. Old Eph, who felt a little conscience-stricken because he had been forced to deny the lamb the company of the horse, picked him up one day and laid him in front of his cart for a ride.

"Why, Bumpy is chewing his cud!" said Eliza, and she called the shepherd to witness the strange phenomenon.

"It's because he's easy in his mind about being with Dobbin." Old Eph explained.

The shepherd smiled. "Turn the lamb on the other side and walk the horse back again."

Bumpy ceased to ruminate.

"Turn him on the right side again and trot the horse."



The lamb filled his little wasted cheeks and plied his back teeth encouragingly.

"The motion of the cart helps the weak muscles of the gullet. It is the left lung that is sore." Michael leant over the lamb's exhaling breath. "It is not tuberculosis. The spark of life left in him you may revive, Eliza."

The shepherdess renewed her efforts. She kept him scrupulously clean. She laid him on his right side that he might digest with greater ease his slender meals. She strengthened him so that he took little constitutionals at her heels. She let him pay a visit to the old horse. But the grey calmly helped himself to a bunch of the lamb's wool. The jealous attendant could not again subject her charge to this disrespect. Bumpy had no complaint. His body was so weak and ill-nourished that the fleece pulled without feeling to the wearer.

Eliza persevered. When Bumpy was too exhausted to walk she carried him. When he could not stand alone she propped him. She

consoled herself with the hope that he would grow happy again on his mother's return. And so closely connected in the shepherd's mind is rumination and prosperity that when Bumpy, on his right side, with his head pillowed on the straw, chewed a consistent cud, Eliza's heart was gladdened, even while she could not stay her tears.

There was no enthusiasm on the arrival of Priscilla and Little Priscilla, for Little Siberia's branch had lost the fame of its progenitors. Their points and likeness were undeniable, but beside the fair company they had joined, Priscilla and her little ewe had not the look of prosperous sheep. The prize had not been awarded them.

Bumpy's mother and sister were taken to his pen. They had been absent three weeks. The lamb remembered, but they had forgotten him. His dam refused him without rudeness; for if her memory had been charged too greatly with her recent experiences, she was still a sheep of gentle quality. But Little

Priscilla ran at him with all the contempt of a mother's darling for the outcast. Her well-set head butted vigorously into Bumpy's sore left side. The little drama was enacted quickly. Eliza was just in time to catch the hurt lamb as he fell.

His relatives were hurried from his habitation. He barely breathed all day, and at sundown passed on to a land where there are no cattle fairs.

We all thought that a broken heart was the cause of Bumpy's death. But the shepherd did not fail to hold his usual autopsy. He found that the lamb had ruptured a blood vessel on the left lung crying for his mother, and had been dying of internal hemorrhage.

The Autocrat was disappointed with Little Siberia's stem of his famous Priscilla strain. "Weed out the twin of the lamb that died and the dam," he said. "We cannot afford to breed weak lungs."



## CHAPTER VII

### BEATRICE

So closely is the gay mood allied to the somber that the very pleasant orchard party turned by impulse into a near-by churchyard. While an old lady grew reminiscent about a wedding that occurred at the church in her youth, my attention was held by the graven image of a lamb above a buried child.

It was years after that I became acquainted with Goshen sheep and followed their for-



tunes to Little Siberia. But I often saw on the weather-beaten headstone the sleeping lamb, its nose put back against its heart.

I could not help hailing little Beatrice as its perfect prototype. The eyes of the image were closed, but they must have been doe-dark like Beatrice's own. I recognized the spotless body as the emblem of the child's soul. When the lamb's existence was discovered at three o'clock one cold morning she had curled herself up in a far corner to die. This is the custom of new-born lambs when they find no welcome. They take themselves to a distant and inclement spot that death may find them quickly. A little ram, Beatrice's brother, lay already lifeless, though still limp, at the Bit-ba's feet, because he would not believe in her inhospitality. The young mother's customary independence was somewhat shaken. She sent out into the still air a challenging note for help.

Eliza, appearing, passed the dead twin by. A glance told her she was useless to him. But

in the little ewe, Beatrice, there was still life. The Bit-ba stood unconscious that she had any lesson to teach her young but since she made no objection to being an object lesson the shepherdess pushed the lamb up to the milk. She even placed the nipple between its unresisting lips. The little one waited and finding no motherly response her mouth fell gently away from its sustenance. Beatrice now wiggled her tail and shook out her fleece with unintentional deceit. Eliza felt the mother's udder. It was as pliable as if the milk had been drawn. The Bit-ba was chewing her cud. Nothing then remained to be done but make Beatrice a warm straw nest, remove her dead brother, and re-supply the hay rack.

At daybreak Eliza visited her charge again. The little ewe had crawled back to her draughty corner to die. As the shepherdess caught her up in her arms the limp head fell over.

Beatrice was taken to the shepherd's cabin,

her feet chafed, and her entire body rolled up in an old sheepskin. When Eliza went back to the mother to draw some milk she found the Bit-ba had none. The experience of the shepherdess for once had stood her in poor stead. Though she had been on hand to save, yet she had nearly lost the life of a lamb. She was not willing now to trust alone to the milk of another ewe, but bade Old Eph reach down the whiskey flask that she might add the stimulant of the liquor. The first teaspoonful of this mixture that was administered to the dying lamb ran back from the corners of her mouth. Nothing discouraged, the shepherdess fed it spot by spot until her patient could swallow. The struggling life at last came back to the little inert body and Eliza's conscience was eased.

By careful feeding the shepherdess now sought to increase the Bit-ba's supply of milk. She succeeded in a measure, but there was never enough in the dam's udder to make it ache for her lamb. Eliza did not waste a

drop, and little Beatrice soon learned to eat bran. Old Eph, coming in and out to build up the fire, taught her to walk by the leading attraction of a birch stick she was fond of biting. Her weak crawl soon strengthened. The old man taught her to step to a rhythm by ringing the changes on her name, "Beaty beat, Beaty beat, Beaty Beaty Beaty beat." Round and round the stove the lamb footed it briskly to Old Eph's birch baton. This rhythmical gait clung to Beatrice so that she afterwards became known among the flock by her step.

When Beatrice was two weeks old she was led to and from her mother's pen and taught to draw the milk in the natural way. The Bit-ba, while permitting this, gave her lamb no sign of recognition. Eliza knew that it was time to wean Beatrice from the cabin fire that her mother might learn to know her and lead her to pasture in the spring.

The Bit-ba could no longer remain unconscious of her lamb, but she showed disdain.



Eliza came to help her charge at meal times until Beatrice became quick and ready enough to help herself. But the dam only suffered her offspring's presence and weaned her early. It was Eliza the lamb followed to pasture.

In the sheep yard was another cast-off ewe twin. She was carried from pen to pen and given drink where drink was to be found. She was a bright practical lamb and would snatch any nipple she was held to. But she grew up restless and always wishing for more. The shepherd playfully called her Wish-It. The age of Wish-It differed from that of Beatrice by a day. Both lambs, being attached to the shepherdess, became companions. Wish-It was merely emulative, while Beatrice was friendly. On mild winter nights, when the moon made lambs think it still day, Eliza would permit these two foster lambs to accompany her on her last walk round the sheep fold's snowy enclosure. Wish-It would bounce higher than Beatrice and skip fast and furiously to outdo her gentler companion.

But Beatrice was not jealous any more than she was conscious that her gambols had a grace to which the leaner body of Wish-It could not attain

Beatrice grew and prospered. She was distinguished by her mother's shapely back and springing bodily ease. Her step was still set to the rhythm taught her by her old dancing-master, Eph. Though she was with the flock, she was not of them. She belonged to Eliza. To the shepherdess was given the docility and affection the dam had rejected. Eliza was both law and love to little Beatrice.

Often on cold mornings, when the bitter northwest wind blew through the gaps in Little Siberia's woodland, Eliza hugged the lamb and buried her cold fingers and nose in her warm fleece. Beatrice stood at ease sweetly unconscious of the comfort that she gave. At night, when the shepherdess had left the fold, the ewe quietly retired to her corner. She had not unlearned the lesson of her suckling days. Her pleasure in the coming of

Eliza on the morrow was not marred by impatient anticipation during the night. She slept well. Yet it was her own gay shake of the head that gave the shepherdess first greeting in the morning, her own cold healthy nose that was the first to press against Eliza's hand. She followed her about like a dog all day. She received her own portion at meal times, ate it every bit, but manifested no unlawful interest in that given to others. In the summer she grazed alone, but if the shepherdess were there she asked no sweeter pasture than that which grew about Eliza's feet.

The gambolling rollicking sheep month of September came and the ram went a-court-ing. Beatrice lifted her body high in the air in pure joy at the weather. She skipped and danced as freely as the rest, but when the ram admired her she hugged the side of the shepherdess. Eliza, in self-protection, was then forced to whip Othello off. Thus, while the shepherdess was there, the great fellow's attentions to Beatrice were respectful. But one day

on her way downhill to the fold Eliza came to a halt at the sound of thumping hoofs behind her. It was Beatrice following her. The ram was panting just behind. Eliza seized a prickly bush to fortify herself. It would have been inadequate persuasion for Othello, but a devoted ewe had followed him to reclaim his attention from her unwilling rival. Diverted from his object by his jealous lady, his retreat was easily effected by a little whipping about the ears.

The lambing season came. Wish-It was mother to a bonny ewe lamb. But no lambs came to Beatrice. Wish-It careered about in her restless fashion and challenged Beatrice to fight. Beatrice knew no envy. She greeted Wish-It's lamb sweetly. She herself was still a lamb in the hands of her shepherdess.

When Beatrice was two years old, the Autocrat picked her out as a fine sheep. "Where," said he, "is her lamb?" Eliza trembled. But the shepherd interposed with, "I advise you to keep that sheep another year."



The season of courting came round again. Many a blow from the hot-headed king of the fold did Beatrice receive. But a prickly bush had once been held between them by the shepherdess. It established a precedent. Beatrice now protected herself. She developed such fugitive habits at pasture that Eliza was fain to procure her peace within the fold. September passed. Othello grew indifferent. Beatrice resumed her quiet ways. She had one distinct pleasure in life round which all minor pleasures rolled—the companionship of the shepherdess. She ate for her, she played for her, but she would gladly leave both food and play to follow her.

Lambs were frisking about again. Beatrice frisked with them. Wish-It came out with her second child. Beatrice greeted this new member of the flock as sweetly as a year ago. Wish-It took offence and desired to fight as of old. Beatrice responded by ranging herself inoffensively beside the shepherdess.

Eliza saw the Autocrat's dashing vehicle

drive into the yard. "How about that sheep? Has she a lamb?"

The shepherd shook his head. "She may breed in her fourth year," he said.

"And become the mother of an unprolific strain," said the Autocrat.

Eliza left the yard.

Ill-bred lambs stood in the feed trough, while the more gentle patiently picked their bran from between their dirty feet. Meek yearling ewes found their way into stocks made by uneven hurdles and pushed helplessly forward, while the older ones butted them for their stupidity.

Eliza waited in far pastures until her favorite should be dead. It was her first deflection from duty. The air was still yet it seemed to her that a high wind was shouting in the trees.

Beaty beat, Beaty beat, Beaty Beaty Beaty beat. Beatrice had followed her. She would not be put to death without the leading sanction of her shepherdess.

It had remained for Beatrice to teach Eliza a lesson she never forgot. What we cannot do we must.

On their return the sheep owner was still in the yard. "Michael, how long since a sheep slipped you like that?"

Beatrice died a lamb. She was three years old.

"When you have any more lambs which owe their start in life to whiskey, cut them off at three months," and with these parting words the Autocrat drove away.





## CHAPTER VIII

### FOSTER, THE WRESTLER

ELIZA, the shepherdess, woke me coming in at the dreary morning hour of three. She had been tending Harebells, a down ewe that had been laboring for twelve hours with a lamb two weeks overdue.

"Is the little one born?" I asked.

"He is born," Eliza gasped, "but he is not a little one."

"Overdeveloped, and a ram. The Autocrat will want to keep him."



Eliza dropped in a chair.

"Is the lamb with its mother?"

"He won't be anywhere else. I left him on his knees pulling for milk that isn't there."

"You can't control him?"

"His birthday was really two weeks ago," said Eliza as she left me to take a much-needed rest.

When I went to see the lamb which was two weeks old though but a day, he was being rescued from imminent suffocation. The suffering mother had lain down upon him while he sucked. Foster, the Wrestler, earning already the name he came to be called by, struggled in his savior's arms until he was set down. Nothing disturbed, he went on his knees again and burrowed at his prostrate dam for the nipple. The ewe struggled to her feet and snorting and butting at her offspring fell, covering him with her body again.

I grieved to see Harebells in such a plight. I remembered her as a lamb dropped in the snow. She was so clean and fair that her

pretty primrose fleece looked pure against the field's winter covering. Her infant voice was a chime so fairy-like that it suggested the name we gave her. She grew into a perfect sheep, and her progeny were held in high estimation by the owner of the flock. He prophesied that even through cross-bred rams the ewe would one day throw herself. He waited for that lamb. No lamb could have looked more like its dam than Foster, the Wrestler, but the resemblance was sheeply. He had no expression of her baby days. He was large. The wrinkles allowed in the jackets of newborn lambs were filled out in his. His well-set shoulders and straight spine already insured the proud self-reliant carriage of his mother.

When the shepherd ordered Foster's separation from the ewe that bore him, the lamb was hurdled off among the cheerful busy flock. The instructions received from Goshen that the baby ram should be kept off cow's milk were unnecessary. Foster disdained all

other food than sheep's milk. He was carried about at periods to draw it from strange udders. Between meals he traveled up and down his little pen like some wild caged thing seeking escape. The society of the flock was no solace to him. He wanted his mother.

Meanwhile Harebells, to whom medicine had before been unknown, was drugged with opium to ease the recurring spasms of her lamb's birth. Her abounding vitality manifested itself in her desire to live. Her fine appetite never wavered. When her pain had weakened her so that she could not stand, she ate lying down. Eating occupied her brain. Nature had forgiven her the anxiety of maternity for its pangs.

Foster's cause with his mother was hopeless. Her udder was dry and her attitude towards him ferocious. Such promiscuous suck as the lamb gained among the flock was little better than starvation to him. His immense frame was hard to fill. Content could not flavor such meals as his. When taken out to

nurse, he would wrestle from the detaining arms too soon. His energy often scared his foster mothers into uncharitable dryness, and if they were at large they fled him as the plague. When he was a month old, he still spurned the bran and clover kept before him and waited with impatience for his hard-won milk. He grew lean and hungry behind his bars and his handsome face with its brown eyes and sweeping lashes seemed to gain too great prominence for the tardy growth of his body.

One night an unexpected northwest wind brought whirling snow. The shed exposures were unprotected and the storm beat in, startling the flock into busy grubbing industry. Foster's caged restlessness became redoubled. He sent his little shrill penetrating cry abroad in desperate and final appeal to his mother. She answered him through the storm. An old ewe pushing her jealous nose as near as she could to the lamb's untasted plenty, made by her strength and persistence a small wedge-like



opening between two of the hurdles of his pen. Instead of resenting her depredations, Foster met her nose encouragingly from within. When the ewe's nose had once entered she did not desist until her head was through, and then fearful of a trap withdrew it to gain confidence for a second trial. But Foster's head from the other side now filled the opening, and by wriggling with all his strength he enlarged it sufficiently to escape. The flock were seeking every stray bit of food in preparation for the blizzard. The lamb, by the same sure instinct, was seeking his mother. But Harebells had forgotten that she called him, and her pen was stronger than his own. He had, moreover, no old ewe to make the entering wedge. He succeeded at last in making an aperture for his head but his fine broad shoulders could not follow. He would not retreat but pushed and cried on towards the goal of his desire. His mother lay unheeding in her fattening content while the blizzard blew in on the unadmitted body of the lamb.

The shepherd found him in the early morn half buried in snow, and when he picked him up, Foster the Wrestler's head fell limply over his shoulder. Michael's heart, filled with the concern of hundreds, felt the contrast in a wave of individual tenderness for the lamb's departed strength.

But the little fellow had only fainted from cold and exhaustion. Warmth and the administration of hot sheep's milk soon revived him. He lay in front of the shepherd's fire and kicked his way back into life with a vigor it seemed impossible the blizzard should have spared. The shepherd did not know, then, that it was nature struggling for the place the lamb seemed born so royally to fill.

Foster no sooner felt his returning pulse and got his legs than the shepherd's fire had no more charm for him. He owed his savior no gratitude. When Michael was carrying him back to his old quarters through the deceitful noontide of the blizzard, the lamb slipped from his arms to prostrate himself

once more before the only shrine he ever worshipped at. Harebells lay chewing her cud. Foster nosed back and forth to find a creep-hole in to her. He lifted up his shrill voice in vain. His attendant carried him off to his old pen. There Foster spent his strength trying to find a way out. But the little pen had been reinforced. Weakened by exposure and disheartened by his useless efforts, he lay down and cried until his shrill tenor broke in a pathetic echoless sob. And Foster, the Wrestler, born too late, strong, wayward, resistant, ceased to fight and was a lamb.

He now became Eliza's charge. She it was who enticed him to eat bran, she who selected for him bouquets of clover from among the hay. She alone could persuade his foster mothers to stand while he sucked them dry. The lamb grew. He was gaunt, to be sure, as all lambs are when denied their natural sustenance. But his head and shoulders were nobly cast and his carriage firm and proud.

His strength was marvelous, though his voice was but the ghost of its old self.

One hungry March morning, as Foster went down on his knees to suckle a large ewe, Eliza noticed in the lamb a physical deficiency to which she instantly called the shepherd's attention.

"He lay all night with his back buried in the snow," he said reflectively. "I thought his struggles on coming to extraordinary. But he may come right yet. Give him good care."

The shepherdess was sadly aware that the lamb's gaunt frame did her little credit and in her anxiety to increase his appetite she gave him one day some thinly cut strips of an apple. This was a fruit his mother ate with avidity. The lamb had Harebell's tastes as well as her face and form, and he was not long in making Eliza understand that he could very well manage his apples cut into simple fours. The apple diet brought about an improvement in his consumption of fodder.

Foster, no longer betraying any desire to



seek his mother, was released from his pen and allowed to run with the lambs at large.

But he was a sad and lonely lamb, indifferent to the general flock, betraying no gratitude towards his nurses, seeking no companionship save that of the big ram. On the occasions when Othello was let out for exercise Foster ranged himself alongside, and such was the indifference and pride of his front that the big fellow forbore to punish him. When the parent of the flock had gaped and tried muscle and hoof before a keenly observant audience ever ready to give him ample ring space, he would lie down in the sun with Foster couched behind, his baby chin resting upon his father's great hind quarters.

But despite Eliza's care and the shepherd's faith, the lamb had not "come right" and it was now the edge of spring.

The Autocrat drove into the yard. He culled among others the fattened Harebells.

"How do you account for the overdevelopment of her lamb?" he asked the shepherd.

“Continued indigestion from false pastoral conditions often causes a sexual demoralization in old ewes.”

Eliza was feeding her lambs when the sheep owner looked in. Foster was down on his knees at his best loved meal.

“Why, the little fellow is defective,” he said, with much chagrin.

And the lamb who had spent all his fine forces in his endeavor to live was permitted to die with his mother.





## CHAPTER IX

### MARJORIE, THE STARTER

LITTLE Siberia taxed the shepherd's judgment greatly. A sheep's nutriment goes first to wool and afterwards to her bodily good. Thus the heavy-fleeced stock of Goshen were ill-fitted to weather the new conditions. Some years back a hardy mountain ram, named Peter, had been introduced into the flock. His daughter, Peterkin, was the mother of Marjorie. This lamb was born at Little

Siberia and selected to become a permanent member of the flock because she wore the same short close coat as her dam and grand-sire.

Peterkin was exceedingly tame, but Marjorie was timid. She had a trick of starting to her feet and taking flight without apparent reason. While the ewe and her lamb were penned together, the sight of the mother calm, comfortable, unafraid arrested Marjorie's excited movements. But when the lamb was freed, the startling effect of her hallucinations had a most improper and distressing effect on her young companions.

Michael could not help wondering if the rats frightened Peterkin's lamb. Some grain had been upset in a corner of her mother's pen, and stable vermin frequented the spot. But Old Eph averred that he had seen a rat run right under the lamb's nose and she had not flinched.

"It is strange," muttered the shepherd, "for all my old ewes, under existing conditions,



are throwing themselves, and a tamer dam than Peterkin no lamb ever had."

Timid as Marjorie was, she was not shy. She would stand to let the shepherdess stroke her brown velvety nose, edging a little closer, and yet a little closer, forgetting her food in perfect enjoyment of the caress. She even had Peterkin's trick of licking Eliza's hand. But not even Eliza could come upon the lamb unawares, and the pursuit of one of her frisky kind was sufficient to cause her to run. Marjorie's idiosyncrasy was humored for the sake of the flock. Sheep need only example to become party to the dangers of the chase.

The spring came and Peterkin took her lamb out to pasture. The ewe haunted the road fences to see the children as they passed in small groups to and from the rural shool. Peterkin had been a pet of the children's at Goshen. She could not easily unlearn her lesson. A slowly acquired habit becomes in sheep as strong as the instinct of safety. Just as her ancestors feared the storm so

had Peterkin once feared children. And just as the wildest of her kind are the tamest before snow, so the rudest and most inconsequent protection of a child had become to the ewe as a shelter. Childhood had forgotten, had deceived her often. The Goshen children had once led her onto a railroad track and heedlessly left her in front of a freight train. The fear of that throbbing engine had often caused her to quake in her sleep, and her jaw to tremble with suppressed bleatings. But the children were the friends of Peterkin. She watched for them. Their very roughness was a caress. She ate the hedge posies from their hands in preference to her pasture.

Marjorie, beside her, took her education well, charming her mother's friends with her frank regard.

Eliza reproached herself for the oversight that preceded the tragedy of Peterkin, but Michael blamed the sour soil of Little Siberia for the unclean state of the ewe's blood.

Looking back the shepherdess could remember the patient sheep holding aloof with her lamb at feeding time instead of pressing eagerly forward for her share. She had accounted for Peterkin's lassitude, as she had had to account for the weariness of many another, by the consumption of sodden winter vegetation that the sparseness of the spring pasture had tempted her to try. She knew without the sense of touch that Peterkin's ears were cold and her nose hot. These symptoms were common enough just then. But Eliza did not know that Peterkin's eyes pleaded for help between her spells of inertia. And when the attention of the shepherdess was removed, the ewe's bodily sickness was so great that hope would not renew her appeal and the long lashes dropped again over her eyes. Peterkin, however, ate her portion, and then retired in the company of her lamb to a distant corner.

The following night on coming home the eyes of Peterkin did not seek the shepherdess. And the next day the ewe refused her food.

Eliza, alarmed, examined her carefully, parting the fleece observantly here and there. The sheep's brisket was hard and swollen and inflammation was extending fast to all the surrounding tissue. The udder was empty and shrunken. Marjorie had had no milk for days.

The shepherd was away at Goshen. There was no one else in whose hands Eliza could trust the kindly knife. Eliza's very helplessness hit her like a reproach. And when Peterkin, perceiving its lassitude, nosed her lamb anxiously, the shepherdess could not part them. She placed the enclosing hurdles round them both and mechanically fed to them the customary ration for invalid sheep. Marjorie was hungry and attacked the clover blossoms with avidity. The mother raised her eyes in a last appeal. It was then that Eliza, overcome, exclaimed, "I will take care of your baby, Peterkin." The ewe's long lashes veiled her eyes again. She licked the hand of her attendant.



In the morning Peterkin lay dead, Marjorie close beside her, ware, yet unaware. The lamb had ceased trying to rouse the inanimate body, and lay waiting the waking as only her kind can wait.

The primal cause of the death of Peterkin remained a mystery. She died of blood poisoning. As the shepherd said she was so quiet and docile a sheep, so little inclined to take alarm that any foreign attack might have found her out as she lay chewing the cud, or as she stooped to graze.

Eliza did her best to keep her word to the dead mother. No member of the flock was ever tamer to its keeper's hand than Peterkin's orphaned ewe. The love of the dead sheep for Eliza was not gone with her life but remained to be reinforced in Marjorie.

The lamb was at first placed with others of her own age. But when each morning discovered the disorder and trapped trouble that Marjorie's night starts caused, she was placed alone in her mother's old quarters. But Mar-

jorie broke, causing a scare among the general flock. A poor ewe was found with her leg plaited in her hurdle. She had hung there wriggling until her leg was scraped to the bone.

The late fall days had come. Many of the early ewes were pregnant. The flock could not be allowed to suffer for the vagaries of one lamb. As Eliza pondered on this while deftly treating the poor ewe's leg, the cause of the mischief stood looking confidingly at her with Peterkin's eyes.

That night the shepherdess remained with the flock. Marjorie came and lay cosily beside her, chewing the cud until midnight, when she got up, yawned and stretched herself. A young lamb coming out of a feed pen creep to join his mother found the aperture blocked by Marjorie. Without a moment's hesitation he placed his fore feet on her rump. Marjorie jumped. The shepherdess, scolding and entreating by turns, endeavored to arrest the startled sheep. And when after

much effort she pushed through the jamming herd to her favorite's head, Marjorie halted, the tamest lamb in all the flock. She raised her mild eyes to Eliza's face and caressed with her tongue the well-known hand.

In the morning, as Eliza was making her tired way to the cottage, a disabled touring car stopped in the road that faced the colony of sheep sheds. The distance was just great enough to enhance the terror of its throbbing escapement. From this terrible pursuit Marjorie fled, taking the flock with her. There was stampeding, jamming, breaking fence and general distress. The truth, losing nothing by its slow unfolding, dawned on the shepherd and shepherdess at once.

They both remembered the freight train pursuing the mother up the track. And the shepherd knew that his old ewe, Peterkin, true to his theories on the weakening tendencies of the soil, had fixed in the brain of her lamb the echo of her own fear.

The Autocrat, who had driven into the yard

early that morning, sent out the farm hands to try to put the motor on its way before he commented on the disordered flock.

“What have you there? A starter? A sheep like that never lacks excuse for fright. She is a menace to incoming ewes.”

So Marjorie started the flock no more.







## CHAPTER X

### NAOMI

THERE was warning in the initial fall breezes as they veered from the northwest to the northeast—first the gale and afterwards the snow. The nights were growing cool, the mornings chill. Already Bobail had taken to ousting Bobbinette from her warm nest in the straw.

The unmerciful culling of the early spring had forced the shepherd to select a little flock

of two-year-olds for breeding. Two rams of like age were chosen to run at large with these ewes: handsome Brownie, the Southdown, short, close, compact, slow to anger but terrible when aroused, and tall Othello, a grade ram, whose dark ancestors came from Egypt. Othello was the Southdown's equal in all but weight, but where Brownie held the field by self-assurance, Othello gained the day by stratagem.

Brownie, remembering his infant days, had not yet weighed his size and power against the wishes of the shepherdess, and the natural astuteness of the adopted ram, Othello, led him to pay Eliza deference because his rival did.

It was against the shepherd's better judgment to breed ewes before they were thirty months old, and among so juvenile a flock the presence of Eliza was often required. The older stock and the yearlings were, however, kept rigorously apart.

Among these last was little Naomi, the

single daughter of the twin-bearing ewe, Greyhampton. Naomi had generously fulfilled the promise of her infant days. She was as well developed as many a ewe in Michael's young breeding stock, and she was as tame as her mother.

Greyhampton always looked fixedly and inquiringly in the face of the shepherdess when she was addressed, and Naomi acquired the same useful habit. When Naomi's name was spoken, she had both ear and eye to guide her and consequently she never failed to respond. But she did not seek Eliza unless the invitation were added to the address, and then she ran to her, announcing her coming at every step until she paused breathless at her side.

Naomi's speech commenced with the most common consonant in sheep usage, *m*. Her voice was so musical and resonant that Eliza was often tempted to hold converse with her beyond the necessity of routine. The yearling listened intently to all that was said to her

and responded with breathless excitement. She made up for her curtailed vocabulary by expression and repetition.

If Eliza said, "Naomi!" Naomi answered, "Ma!"

If Eliza said, "Naomi, come!" Naomi came, uttering breathless syllables "Ma! ma! ma!" at every step.

If Eliza said, "*Pretty* girl!" Naomi responded by the short declarative sentence, "*Ma* ma."

If Eliza said, "You are the prettiest *sheep* in *all* the *flock*," Naomi answered with a word for every one of Eliza's syllables, accented in innocent mockery of her own, "Ma ma ma ma ma ma ma ma ma."

The ram, Brownie, also had rare intelligence, but it was of a more careless order. He astonished the shepherd by singling out his ewe and absenting himself from the flock in her company. No movement of Brownie's was lost upon Othello. There were many flirtatious ladies in the flock that morning who



would have welcomed the attentions of the brune, but he was alone concerned with his rival. For so young a ram, Othello was an old campaigner. His attacks were many and well directed and always in the enemy's rear. Each sly boost of the tall ram's head took Brownie and his lady further down the hillside and nearer the home fold. In vain the Southdown turned about to have it out tup fashion. Othello avoided direct encounter. He did not want to fight. The Southdown was handicapped by the presence of his grey-eyed Oxford lady and could only turn occasionally and threaten with his eye. Othello succeeded in driving the pair home. Once there Brownie stood at bay, asking no favors. His tall assailant rubbed his head in friendly cajollement up and down Eliza's skirt.

The shepherdess proved a quick and unhesitating arbitrator. She put her arms about Othello's neck and led him to a hurdled space reserved for ram reflection. Within was peace and the consolation of a good feed.

Brownie strayed back to pasture with his ewe. Eliza stood watching them climb the hill. The ram levered himself along shoulder to shoulder with his mate, forestalling alike separation and desertion. On the brow of the hill a third sheep joined them, a ewe with a tripping excitable step that was especially familiar to the watching eyes of the shepherdess. A waiting task detained her half-formed recognition. But at evening when the flock came home, the main body in mass, Brownie and his lady far, far behind, Eliza saw that their company of two was still intruded on by another. It was the yearling, Naomi, courting the ram.

As they came nearer Eliza perceived that her favorite's attentions were by no means welcome to the Southdown. He was still enslaved by the Oxford lady who now walked soberly and affectionately beside him, stooping occasionally to a blade of grass that he might dip and caress her selection. But when Naomi bent also and nibbled nose to nose with

them, she was shouldered away by the ram. The yearling did but take his rough contempt for pleasantry. And thus the three came slowly home to fold. By the time they reached the gate, Brownie's stock of tolerance for the intruder was exhausted. He ceased to be his lady's cavalier and turned brute to her rival. Backing out to a considerable distance he aimed a blow at Naomi which she was too young and foolish to avoid. The ram's head caught her square in the ribs. She received her correction meekly. Eliza sprang forward, and Brownie went jostling by with his ewe.

"Naomi!"

"Ma!"

"Are you hurt?"

"Ma ma *ma*?"

"It is a good thing your coat is thick."

But Naomi showed how little she needed sympathy by trotting after the ram and reassuring him in her charming way that she had succumbed to his masterful charms.

Brownie, however, would have none of her. His lady had retired and he was fatigued and distant. He did not even condescend to roughness.

At dusk the shepherd's manipulating fingers at the Southdown's hurdles were persistently interfered with by a soft brown nose.

"Why, what is this?" he said.

"Ma ma ma *ma*?" answered Naomi.

"A yearling?"

"Ma *ma* ma?"

Just then Eliza came forward to take charge of the young ewe.

"I can't find out how she broke," she said.

But Naomi knew how to break again. Morning found her couched outside Brownie's pen with her chin propped on a hurdle stave, patiently awaiting some sign of the ram's favor. Brownie within lay stretching and chewing his cud.

"How did you get out?" asked the shepherdess.

"Ma *ma* ma ma ma?" responded Naomi.



"She is too young," mused the shepherd as he came up to tend his ram. "And yet sheep often know best. But I don't like the cross. Loose Othello."

But at sight of the tall, dark ram Naomi fled, bleating excitedly as she went. And when the fold enclosure stopped her chase she turned about, backed her ears and showed fight. Othello appealed from force of habit to Eliza to intercede for him with the ewe. But anxious to show that he had no fear for his ultimate success, he turned and ran aggressively at the restraining hurdles of his rival's pen. It was a most unwise proceeding. Brownie cleared the gate and dealt Othello a sudden blow which, had it been as fearful as it seemed, might have disabled the brune. He retreated twisting his neck about in pain.

Brownie, who was a slow, single-minded sheep, now stood staring at Naomi. Not wanting to go and fearing to stay, she uttered her little plaintive call. The ram placed himself abreast of her, licked her face and pawed

the ground in combined appeal and impatience.

"They will not stray if you feed them outside the fold," said the shepherd.

Eliza, perceiving that Othella was recovering himself, hastened to follow the shepherd's advice.

Long before the cold winds of March, which were supposed to usher in the bleatings of the lamb, there were born to Naomi twin ewes so like that it would have been difficult to distinguish them, had not one in nursing fared a trifle rounder than the other.

The Autocrat drove into the sheep yard one raw Easter morn. Among the lambs of Michael's new flock were the yearling's twins. They had not the sad habit of lying in corners, consoling one another for the lack of milk. They bestowed their innocent graces abroad. Any mother's back was a fleecy throne for them. Twin Number One sat perched between the shoulders and ears of the dam, Cissy. Twin Number Two scraped her

impatient fore foot on the beautiful coat of the young mother, Elfreeda. Naomi spent her time looking wildly about for her offspring. Their fearless impartiality, though a pain to the mother, was a pleasant voucher of vigor to the keepers of the flock.

“You have gambled on a good cross, there, Michael,” said the Autocrat. “We’ll keep those twins.”

“Those,” said the shepherd, “are love lambs.”





## CHAPTER XI

### ROME AND EGYPT

EGYPT and her fair twin sister, Rome, were born under favorable sheep conditions, and came of a parent stock that never worried. When her heavy dam stepped on Egypt's little shoe and pinched it out of shape, the lamb hardly flinched. The big unconscious Hampshire mother, which could not feel the pain of bearing young, cared for them as easily as for the mouthful of cud in her cheek.



Rome and Egypt came with the flock to Little Siberia as yearlings. Rome, the blonde, was a long sheep, like her mother. She accepted her change in life with all the splendid quiet resistance of her breed and did her sheeply duty, despite the undermining influences which were soon at work on her. But dark Egypt, or Gipsy, the shorter-backed sheep, was more rebellious. She refused to come within the fold, bearing the flock unwilling company all day, and at night starting through the woods in search of her old home. The shepherdess and Rome went early every evening to seek Gipsy on her habitual trail lest the lengthening shadows should find her out and drive her wild. When Gipsy was found, she would set her short legs wide apart, back her ears and drop her black eyes resentfully, and it was only at the instance of her sister's gentle persuasions that her lingering footsteps consented to follow her guide's lead.

One night Eliza forgot the little wanderer

from the fold. The fact that Rome stood uneasily staring into the dark as her keeper came away did not impress the worried mind of the shepherdess until she heard the mournful cry of the blonde twin calling for her sister.

Gipsy, missing the incentive of the evening search, had come up nearer fold. The night was full of mist. In the approaching lantern light the lost sheep loomed a giant shadow starting, shying, running, stopping, afraid of her exaggerated self. The shepherdess, fearing to increase the ewe's alarm, went no further, but headed off for home with her lantern turned on full and bright. Rome's soft, mourning note and trustworthy company behind gradually calmed her sister's fears and brought her back to fold.

It was Gipsy's last rebellion. The fold of Little Siberia, inhospitable as it was, had sheltered her from a greater dread. And that sufficed to make it home.

Winter came and the glass told of seventeen degrees below zero. The early lambs met the

full bitterness of the cold. Rome, tender and wary mother, forestalled the killing frost in her retired nest of straw. Her warm tongue worked assiduously at the little tail and ears of her blonde baby. But to little stormy Gipsy maternal duty was a joy unknown. Her single cry startled the sheep fold. Sheep cry for minor troubles, but in suffering seldom. Only Michael had heard such a cry before. "Intestinal hydatids," he said, "from straying late in the woods. She must not yeau again."

Gipsy's baby had a black face, but his coat was of a snow-white unsheeply purity that strengthened the shepherd's surmise. While the mother suffered, the baby ram lay freezing in a draught. When he got his feet and his delayed nutriment, his ears were drooping like a spaniel dog's. The pathetic expression thus given him, together with the exceeding purity of his fleece, earned for him the name of Snowdrop. A week later the tips of Snowdrop's frozen ears were broken off in the rub of the flock. The bleeding stumps enhanced

the lamb's sad attitude which was really caused by the freakish behavior of his dam.

Patience, undeniable attestation of sheeply breed, took the place of a good mother to Snowdrop. When he went to increase the flock's reputation for fine early lambs, Gipsy faced another summer on Little Siberia, plainly relieved of a charge.

Rome's new coat did not present the bright close appearance of the fleece which had been taken from her in June but grew out in little impoverished tufts like the stray locks that have remained in brush and brier over winter. But the change in her gait was more noticeable. The grace of youth had deserted her step. She became uncertain, shambling, bow-legged. She lifted up her fore legs and set them down with perceptible care of the knee joints. The fine ewe lamb that trotted beside her was apparently without a flaw. Gipsy retained the brilliancy of her fleece and was attacked in a lesser degree by weakness at the knees. But her resentment at life on Little



Siberia was fading. She grew dejected. Her attitude was translated by the other sheep into permission to brush her out from the choice bits of food. Gipsy accepted the inhospitality of the flock with a stoicism that was far more affecting than her sister's meekness. For the dark sheep's voice on rare occasions still lent color to the nature of her disease. The plaintive, stirring yearning of it lived like a strange mid-tune, half disguised by the natural vocal swell.

The instinct that had caused Rome to care for the whereabouts or the safety of her twin sister developed into a watchfulness for all flock alarms. The sight of two rams quarreling was an affright to her nervous intelligence. Her slow mournful note, as like the dove's as any voice could be, gave persistent warning, and her awkward legs traveled patiently in search of someone to check the fray. If the flock trespassed, Rome came back to fold alone, true and prompt informant, ready to become a faithful guide. Were a little lamb

trapped in his creep, Rome cried for aid. She could not without concern watch the giddy-pated bumps of two childless ewes at the approach of spring. And whereas the shepherd heard Gipsy's retrogression in her voice, he saw Rome's through her sharpened observation. The two sheep were marked, but owing to their successful lambs and the weight of their second year fleece, they were again wintered. Lack of lime in the soil was adjudged the cause of their weak knees, and their failing looks were forgiven for their productiveness.

But this judgment did not tally with the shepherd's. By the dark sheep's voice and the timid alarm of her blonde sister he knew he owed them the kindness that all good shepherdry gives the failing members of a flock.

Another winter passed over the woes of Rome and Egypt. It was less cold than the previous one. Both sheep ate well. Rome was in touch with all the happenings of the flock and her warning came at all hours of the

day and the night. Gipsy spoke twice during the season; once before snow when she was very hungry, and once when her second lamb was born. I was present then and saw the shepherd hurry away. Old Eph with his simple candor called the sheep's note good music. And if good music will produce strong mental pictures, he was right. For when Gipsy cried, it was as if a rosary told music on its beads.

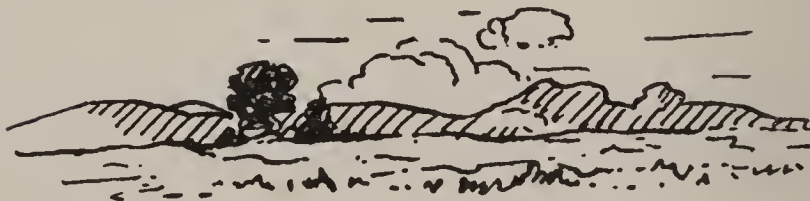
Rome's baby was again a credit to the flock, and the shrinking mother had milk to nurse it well. But after that cry, there stood beside Gipsy a little unnatural blown figure, fit subject for the trochar before it had ever grazed.

A hasty glance at the new-born lamb in the dim light of evening deceived the shepherds into believing that it was too full of milk, and Gipsy's udder bore testimony to that opinion.

In the morning Gipsy's baby was dead, and the mother stood making no lament. The little body had not shrunk and within it was found a hydatid the size of a goose's egg.

When the Autocrat culled Gipsy in the early spring he said to the shepherd, "Better take the twin sister, too."

Rome's strength, it was found, had been drained by parasites of a commoner order. But on Gipsy's intestines were strung full half a score of hydatids, which one by one her misery had told.







## CHAPTER XII

### BIG BILLY

BIG BILLY'S great-great-grandsire came from England. He was a fine ram but never permitted more than a limited monarchy. Big Billy possessed the flock, his keepers and the Autocrat. And there were occasions when Billy's strong sense of possession passed the boundaries of home and the limit of the law. The ram's propensity for breaking fence

did not alarm the shepherd greatly; for he knew Billy's kin and had watched their youth and high spirits sober into good sheeply routine in the second year.

In the meantime Big Billy's flagrancies caused quite as much amusement as dread. There was nothing Billy resented as much as inattention. Not only was he accustomed to the best food at regular periods, but any desire on his part to be friendly with his keepers was strictly respected. Hurried or careless attendants were very apt to receive tup chastisement in the rear. To Eliza he was always a baby. She would turn good-temperedly to receive the bunt of his woolly head upon her open palms and tell him what a fine boy he was. Billy, to do him justice, was never above the softer feelings. He would bleat acquiescence to the praise of the shepherdess and trot happily along by her side.

Old Eph was bringing a wheelbarrow of kale to the cottage one early day in spring when Big Billy met him in the road. The ram

helped himself, distributing, in princely fashion, much more than he consumed. The stable hand threw his soft hat in the thief's face. Billy cared nothing for that. Nonchalant and assured, he had his way, while Old Eph bore him unwilling company and begrudged admiration.

On the afternoon of the same day, stimulated by his diet of kale, Big Billy leaped lightly over his boundary fence into Griffin's rye field. The grass was not advanced. The rye was young and tender. Billy dispassionately cropped it. Griffin's wife, coming across to protect the crop, cried, "Go away! I hate sheep, anyway." Billy had never listened to language like that before, but he understood enough of its purport by the woman's attitude. Backing out deliberately, for good aim, he ran at her and knocked her down. She fell easily on soft spongy ground, but the ram's offence was most humbly apologized and atoned for by his owner. and Billy was restrained for awhile.

Eliza will not soon forget an escapade of Big Billy's that nearly cost him his life. He passed one day with one of his easy sudden breaks over the fence into the main road. He was amusing himself with the hedgeways when the shepherdess arrived in hot haste. A motor was coming speeding around the bend to meet the express at the country station. At sight of his kind keeper, for pet sheep rarely miss a chance to show off, Billy backed out elaborately, prepared to butt the car. Eliza snatched from her dress a red handkerchief which she carried about her for a danger signal on the farm. She waved her improvised flag in front of the flying machine. The blow which Billy meant for the motor grazed her from behind and shook her on her feet, but she managed to catch the ram deftly about the neck and drag him to the roadside bank. There they both remained long after the motor had passed. Eliza was assuaging her excitement in relief, while the ram, innocently pleased at being *tête-à-tête* with his



keeper on forbidden pasture, grazed at her knee.

When Big Billy was three years old, the Autocrat wished him to compete for a prize. The ram had lost much of his freakishness. He carried himself in the conscious manner most becoming to handsome stock. His fleece was the prescribed texture and color. His ears and legs were beyond dispute. His fine eyes looked out from a brown face whose soft tones resembled the sepia clouds in a photographed sky. Only the instinctive knowledge of a keeper of flocks could trace a difference between Billy and his great-great ancestor, the imported Southdown. That difference was plain to Michael. He saw it in the too-fine ears where the veins were traceable. He felt it in the still childish ways of the grown ram.

"He is cursed with the drawbacks of the soil and the sensitiveness of inbreeding," he said. "If he goes to the show we shall lose him."

But the Autocrat would not be overruled.

"Then send a wether with him," advised the shepherd.

But the attendance of Big Billy's fat devoted stable companion and target was discarded lest he might distract the showman's eye from the ram.

Big Billy was fed up, his fleece was groomed, his hoofs polished, and he was carefully packed and shipped to a distant city. As he was the sheep owner's only exhibit, no keeper was sent to care for him.

The ram was rocked and shunted and snorted on his way to the fair. The slats of his crate, at first an indignity, became a welcome shelter from unfamiliar sights and sounds. Instead of being kindly led, he was shoved into his stall on the fair grounds. No sheep like to be shoved. Some sheep will not be shoved. It was Billy's first experience of the kind. He made a sharp turn which was forestalled and he found himself in a stable where decomposing manure betrayed itself

under the surface straw. The ram, accustomed to clean bedding, showed his distaste by jumping over the tall door. The nearest beaten road was the race track. With sheeply instinct Billy took to it. He won some admiration ere he was caught. But it was not the admiration for which he had been sent to the fair—and which was the just due of such distinction of beauty and blood as his.

Billy was again shoved into his ill-smelling stable, but before the door was closed upon him, he put his disrespectful attendant out in a manner that was not as foreign to the man as shoving was to Billy. The interested crowd outside could not resist a laugh. It had been better for Billy had that laugh been restrained.

The irate attendant came at midnight to the ram's stall. Billy, thirsty and downhearted after his useless chase, did not notice the intrusion until something cold was pressed against his ear. The mad ringing of an alarm clock caused the sheep to jump in the air. All

means of escape was now cut off. Billy faced his tormentor, not to fight but to appeal. The man laughed. "Aha, my fine buck! I don't think you will take first prize." Worse than the clock's alarm was the display of such anger unappeased. A sheep seeking to escape an enemy turns tail, a sheep knowing that escape is hopeless hides its face. Billy retired to a distant corner and turned his face to the wall.

The next day the excitement of the horse racing, the music and the caresses of the crowd who stopped to look at him through his bars, put the ram on his mettle. He made a fair front.

But the thirst caused by his exercise of the day before had not been assuaged because his water was not fit, and at night he lay down unable to eat his hay. When the attendant came in Billy did not wait to hear the clock, but trembling, put himself in his corner and turned his face away.



Still the blood of the ram came up each day, and Big Billy took a first prize.

But when he returned to the farm, his pride dropped from him like a garment; and the shepherd, after looking him over, knew that the sheep's heart was broken.

Big Billy's satisfaction in his reunion with the flock was matter for doubt. He was blind to flirtatious ewes. He never chastised a young ram. He followed the flock in the rear with rounded back and labored gait. Dissatisfied with the pasture within his easy reach, he lay down without attempt to search for better. The ram's grain ration was increased. He ate it with avidity one day and left it the next.

The winter passed and another summer was well on its way and there was so little change in Billy's good looks that the Autocrat talked again of preparing the ram for show.

"Billy will not attend another show," said the shepherd.

The sheep owner laughed. He well knew the flock keeper's love for Billy and thought Michael spoke as he wished instead of as he thought.

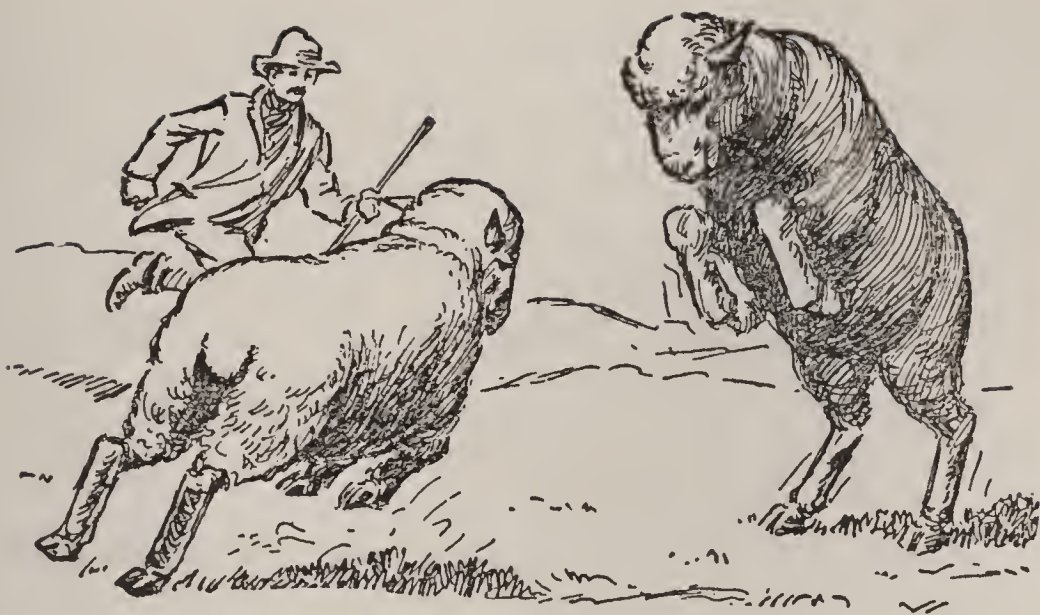
During August Billy's close fleece lost its vigor. It refused to spring against the hand and remained tamely parted like soft hair.

One close muggy day when the Autocrat drove in to give instructions about his prize ram, the shepherd called his nearer attention to the Southdown.

Big Billy was lying down at pasture. He greeted his visitors with a cough. It was not a prolonged cough or a vigorous one. It was a reluctant painful lung confession. No shepherd who has once heard it fails to recognize that sad and empty sound.

Big Billy's left lung was found to be tubercled and grown to his ribs.

"Take no chances," said the Autocrat, "on members of the flock that have stabled with this ram."



## CHAPTER XIII

### LITTLE BILLY

LITTLE BILLY was found beneath some maimed sheep in a freight car. He had been born on the way to the great markets. When the car was opened he was still alive and shaping his sad little mouth for milk. It was not in the Autocrat's creed to encourage unfortunate lambs, but this one he put in his overcoat pocket.

Little Billy lived the hours on the long distance train with marvelous persistency, but

by the time he arrived at the sheep farm the candle of his life was almost snuffed. A hasty draught of sheep's milk revived him. But he was so weakened from the long fast that his first nutriment brought on cholera-infantum and it became necessary to dose him with chalk and catechu.

Ewe's milk was scarce, for the lambing season was over. The lamb received cow's milk, to which the resourceful Eliza added a fresh beaten egg. The little black face soon began to lose its woebegone look, and the grey fleece to gain pride.

Little Billy's intelligence became a by-word with his fellow boarders, Michael and the farm help. They placed the little ram, to shield him from the draught, in a box. The elaborate task of bestowing his legs neatly within it occupied many an hour of his infant days. Often after doubling his knees and dropping on his haunch he found part of his body unaccommodated. There was much rearranging and scuffling of his ungainly mem-



bers, and at this familiar noise Old Eph would say, "Little Billy is going to bed." The lamb's untiring industry in getting himself comfortably tucked up was looked upon with far more leniency than his early rising. Michael had the good shepherd habit of getting abroad at break of day, but Little Billy's clattering hoofs and bleat for breakfast rarely failed to set the men grumbling for their last comfortable hour.

When the little ram was old enough, an effort was made to change his quarters to those of the flock. He was now so large that he could not lie in his box, but it was too old a friend to be abandoned so he lay on top regardless of the uncomfortable edges which seamed his fleece and often dug into his pelt. This beloved box was put outside the door one day and never again admitted to the hut. Day by day it was carried a step nearer to the fold as a sort of gradual education to a larger world. But it was hard work accustoming Little Billy to live ~~with~~ the sheep.

Often the shepherd opened his door in the morning to find the ram stretched across the threshold. This habit was the cause of a mishap. Rube, the woodman, had found a stray terrier. Rube loved dogs almost as well as Eliza loved sheep, and one night he sneaked his pet into the hut with him. In the morning when the door was opened the terrier discovered an animal with a pretentious coat which did not stir at his warning growl. The dog, incensed at such stupidity, had no hesitation in taking off a piece of Little Billy's ear. Eliza, who was never far off in case of trouble, answered the piteous bleat in person. She dressed the ear and the jealous terrier was banished forever from the fold.

Little Billy's tame fearlessness was his danger. Very soon after the dog mishap, the fast flying wheels of the Autocrat's rashly driven cart caught one of his hind hoofs and pinched it badly.

Thus, lame behind and with half an ear, Little Billy took his place among the flock

looking the warrior he was not. His black face always had the sad look of the motherless lamb. He was rather undersized and his fleece was short. But he had two prime requisites for breeding. He would eat fodder until he was obliged to stand on his hind legs in shameful confession of sea-sickness, and he was never known to butt his keepers or to hurt a ewe.

Little Billy was hospitably inclined towards strangers of his kind. Michael said that his shepherd's housing had taught the ram to share his meals. But Little Billy was a mountain sheep. The ways for mountain sheep are many and diverse. And I preferred to think that nature, teaching him to bear bravely inevitable separation from his kind yet suffered him to keep the hope of reunion. Certain it is that Little Billy's heart was open to every newcomer. He met them. He escorted them. He made plain to them the whereabouts of the food, the salt, the water. At night he took them to his separate pen to share his bed.

This trait of Little Billy's was most noticeable in the case of a babyish Canada lamb who came to the flock to be raised on approval for stock purposes. The lamb's name was Johnny. Little Billy made a brother of him. It was a strange sight to see this Johnny, who, fleece included, was twice his guardian's size, put himself completely under the sway of the little ram. They ate together, they walked together, they slept together. This familiarity only pointed the dissimilarity of their habits and dispositions: Little Billy never joined Johnny in his capricious raps at his keepers, or his sudden onslaughts at strangers visiting the flock.

Little Billy was eighteen months old when Johnny was but a yearling. Though it was high dry September, no determination had yet been come to about permitting the gallantries of either of the young rams. They stood without, watching the three-year-old Denmark belaboring his flippant unruly ewes. Little Billy lifted his four feet one after the other



in discomfort at the sight, and rubbed his ear against Johnny's head for sympathy. Johnny, with his eyes still on Denmark, took the fence. Little Billy followed. Rage was uppermost in the heart of the Canada lamb. He at once engaged the senior ram, who was not more than two-thirds his size. And Little Billy, though making no pretence to the good looks of Denmark, was not long in assuring the ewes that he could be a kinder and a sweeter mate. And so alert and successful was he that the flock went over to his cause. In the meantime Johnny, a firm, though unconscious comrade, never left his post of defence.

The shepherdess, spying the two forbidden rams in Denmark's fold and most anxious to prevent miscrossed breeds, attempted to release the older ram from Johnny's engaging bout. The Canada baby, who had never learnt respect for his keepers, threw Eliza full length on the ground. It was then that Little Billy picked a quarrel with his brother.

When help arrived, there was the strangest

buck fight going on that the shepherds had ever seen. Johnny was still pommeling away at Denmark, and Little Billy was giving the big yearling vigorous side raps to attract his attention towards himself. Johnny laid everything at Denmark's door and hit the harder.

The trespassing rams were turned out, Little Billy still aiming nasty blows at his companion. But Johnny's perfect stomach was no more disturbed by his comrade's ingratitude than it was by his offence against Eliza.

"So much for my experiment," said the Autocrat when he drove around. "I shall doubtless have the pleasure of culling most of his lambs next spring."

But Michael, though he took Little Billy's life, did not fail to do him justice. The strain of the mountain ram was the only strain that survived Little Siberia.



## CHAPTER XIV

### THE LILY LAMB

ONE afternoon when the sheep were settling near the homeward path, the shepherdess almost stumbled over a new-born lamb in the bracken. No sheep claimed it. A dark spot over its heart, shaped not unlike the cup of a flower, marred the purity of its ivory coat, but the rich black brown color disposed on its face, and deep blue eyes surrounded by dark

curling lashes gave it a touching expression. An under lash, turned in too far, had forced a tear.

As Eliza pressed the truant eyelash into place, she recalled a little sheep which had hesitated to follow the flock that morning. This ewe had run back several times, had scraped the ground impatiently with her fore foot, had smelt her own trail, and then lifting her head high had licked her lips in anticipation of her young's first kiss. But Eliza had laid these actions to the nervousness of inexperience and the shearling had melted in among the flock.

The shepherdess waited for the cry of the lamb at her feet, hoping that its appeal might discover the mother. But the lamb in its nest of fern made no complaint, and when the sheep began to drift homewards Eliza picked up the little burden and followed.

Old Eph came curiously forward. He felt encouraged by the unusually pleasant expression of the shepherdess.



"It's a lily lamb," he said.

"It is fair," conceded Eliza, and moved on. The indifference of Eliza for Old Eph is plainest in her lambs' contempt for him.

"There's the shadow of the lily cup over its heart," said the stable hand.

Michael always said shepherdry had cured him of superstition, but Old Eph was still full of the stories he claimed to have gathered from shepherds as a boy.

"Lily lambs don't come to stay," he went on. "If they do, the cup grows out. But when they go they never go alone."

Eliza made no reply. She knew that the mark would grow out if the lamb lived. And as for company to die with, that wouldn't be hard to find on Little Siberia. So she set about looking for the mother of the lily lamb.

The sheep were by this time packing eagerly towards their evening accommodation. In the uplifted head of a young ewe named Wild Cherry, the shepherdess recognized the expression of the shearling whose unlooked-

for actions had attracted her attention that morning.

Wild Cherry was found to have milk and was stabled with the lamb. But she gave it only half-hearted recognition and begged for the company of the flock.

The shepherd came to look at the ewe that had yeaned out of season. For although the Indian suns had pledged the death of the grass by the stained leaf, the grey herald of the lamb was still weeks distant. "False vigor," said the shepherd. "This pasture won't support it. I must watch the ewe. If I were you, Eliza, I'd let the lamb go."

"It's as easy to feel that way about one lamb as another," said Eliza.

The lamb made no effort to help itself. It crawled under the belly of the young ewe, causing her to stumble in her effort not to tread on it. When placed in a more definite position, the lamb brushed the nipple with its nose and struggled to its feet. And yet the lily lamb was neither poor nor weak. It stood

up sweet and undesiring beside its mother, more like a companion to her than a child.

“You won’t get lily lambs to drink,” said Old Eph sententiously.

Eliza thought it had been too long without its first nutriment and tried the spoon. In directing the spoon much milk was spilled and the rest the lily lamb permitted to escape from its mouth. A ewe’s first milk is rich and adhesive. The beauty of the lamb’s downy muzzle was soiled, the dark blue eye looked tearfully on the shepherdess, for the troublesome lash had turned in again.

The lamb lay with its mother all night. In the morning Wild Cherry jumped her high fence and rejoined the flock. She was caught twice a day to render the same service to her lamb that the shepherd’s cow might have done.

Despite the lamb’s distaste for food, Eliza persisted with small frequent doses of the ewe’s milk. The pretty baby fleece began to show signs of mauling, and it was evident the

lamb feared the coming of the shepherdess. The effect of her own patience was rendering the nurse conscience-stricken when at three o'clock one morning, thirty-six hours after its birth, the lily lamb turned to its food with the look of a thing tamed against its own judgment. The unruly eyelash, which would still turn in, made it hard for Eliza to believe the lamb was not crying.

When it was graduated from a nursing to a bottle baby, the lamb was fed three times a day, more frequent attention being an embarrassment to Eliza when afield with her ewes. The loneliness of the home fold, added to its heavier meals, did not aid the lamb's weak digestion. The shepherdess could not but notice the falling off, and longed for the winter days when she need not forsake her charge.

By that time the lily lamb had reached the doubtful honor of being a kitchen invalid, and from drinking half a pint of milk three times a day had come back to a teaspoonful each



hour. Old Eph often passed the door and looked in; but he did not dare to say a word for the nursing of the lily lamb had become almost a passion with Eliza. The lamb had taken its growth but slowly, and it shrank in the false indoor atmosphere. Its mouth was pathetically ugly from the application of food and medicine. It lay down so much that the fleece on its little flanks was always crushed.

When the real lambing season came the fires were lit in the shepherd's hut for chilled weaklings. The farm yard was filled with maternal murmurs and infant demands. The shepherd was busy at his favorite occupation of discovering lamb traps. No misplaced hurdle, no tiny creep hole into foreign pens, no crack between a beam and a barn wall was too trivial to be ignored. Unexpected newcomers had been known to stray into the strangest places to die just born. Eliza's services were constantly required. Often to breast the work of the sheep yard she reached her kitchen nursing five minutes past the

hour. And even this small delay in the course of a week had crowded out several of the lily lamb's meals. When Eliza first brought it to the kitchen, it could toddle at her heels. Now it had to be lifted and carried to and from its bed in the corner. The necessity for haste in the performance of her tasks and a growing resentment for her own limitations often rendered the touch of the shepherdess ungentle. But this could not hurt the lamb, for the only grace now left to it was the pride of its nurse. A few moments of her own neglect had power to wreak on Eliza a more lasting and reproachful ugliness than Nature will ever attribute to sheep. The lily lamb had not at one time hoped for life. The awakened desire was fulfilled in suffering.

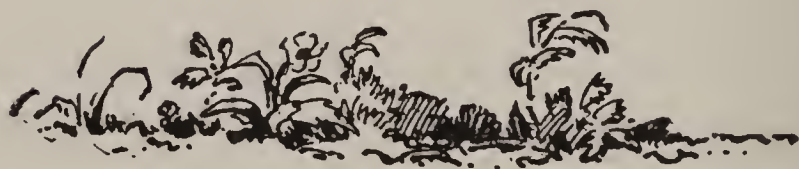
The kitchen fire was kept alight, the copper kettle filled. The night lamp burnt on the table. A bottle of sweet oil, a liquid sedative, a cordial and a little spoon were ranged conveniently in its ray. At midnight Eliza turned in, tired and shivering with the chill of com-

ing snow. The lamb's nourishment was due at three. It was four before the shepherdess, conscience-stricken even in her dazed awakening, was on her feet again. She knew that her body in its physical weariness and insufficiency had at last harnessed her soul to its disgrace, and spiritual retreat had given up the life for which she craved. The world outside was white and the air thick with falling flakes. The lily lamb waited in its corner. Its head was twisted round and under to make a pillow for its heart. The shepherdess sought to dispose the little body. The head rolled back again—the picture of a thing forgot. Eliza recalled her first buoyancy at the unexpected discovery of the beautiful lamb, her ecstasy when it lent itself to her care. The finality of the lily lamb's departure sharpened both joys into pain.

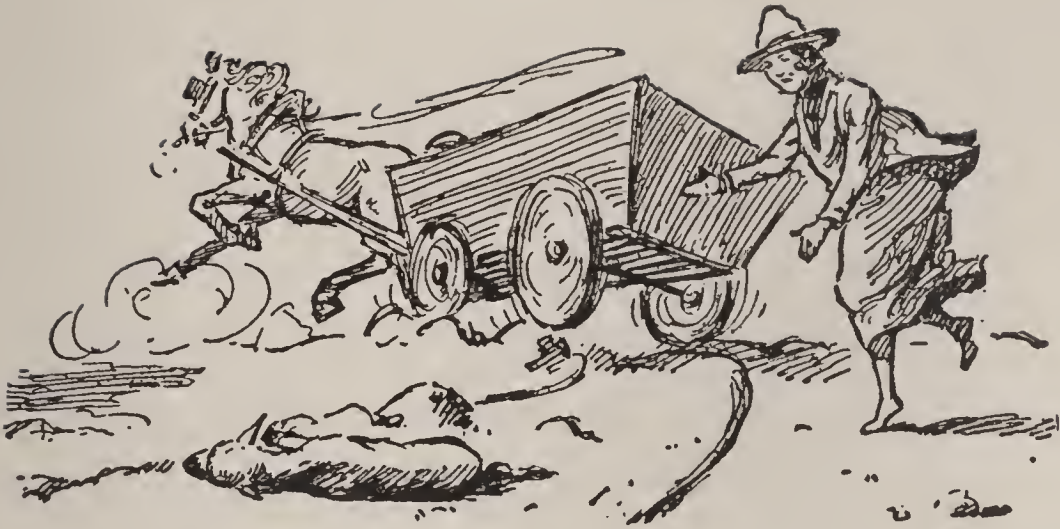
The Autocrat visited Little Siberia on the day the lily lamb died. He marveled at the sentimental patience of experienced shepherds. "Cut off the mother," he said.

“She’ll gain at least a month next season and the spring market will be crediting us with fall lambs.”

The shepherd sought out Wild Cherry. She was lying dead on her bed of straw, her head twisted round like a wryneck bird’s.







## CHAPTER XV.

### BOY

ELIZA found Little Billy's grandchild at midnight one early January. Its father was of the same pure domestic breed as its grandmother, but the little ewe betrayed from birth a photographic likeness to her mountain grandsire. Welcome, the young dam, was one of the best nourished sheep in the flock. Old Eph volunteered a reason for this. Welcome had a voice which could stretch for a full half minute without breaking, and she

used the advice contained in the best shepherd manual of all—Ask, and it shall be given you. But no one realized the range of the sheep's vocal expression till Welcome began to talk to her lamb, and the shepherdess felt quite satisfied to leave the little thing to the caresses and clever instruction of its mother.

But in the morning, much to her surprise, Eliza found another lamb in Welcome's pen, a brother to the little ewe. It had arrived unexpectedly in the early morning hours. Its fleece was still damp, but it claimed the shepherdess. It has always been a matter of thrilling interest to me to see how the new lambs accept Eliza.

The shepherdess named the twins Boy and Girl, and thus they were recorded. Rarely are twin brother and sister such a contrast. Girl's eyes were dark blue, Boy's a solemn brown. The grey undergrowth in Girl's spotted fleece was a surety. Boy's coat was pure and creamy. Girl was a little long in her dark hairy legs and ears, and a bit tented

in the spine. Boy was saddle-backed with extremities of rare proportion. His nose and ears had been carefully dipped in the exact Southdown coloring. His face was ornamented with pompoms as delicate as the fluffy dandelion seed before it blows, and his chubby brown legs were warmly stockinged to the hoofs. Boy was the shepherd's promise, the grade lamb with the Down beauty and the vigorous blood of the mountain ram.

Eliza entered Welcome's pen to discover if he was having his full share of mother-love and nutriment. She found the ewe very kindly disposed towards her last twin, but Boy no sooner smelt his dinner than he promptly got to his feet and looked at Eliza. The little ram's front teeth were examined; for inflamed gums will sometimes discourage a suckling. Two of Boy's front teeth were come, two others were peeping. The gums were cool and pink. The shepherdess started the flow of milk with her finger and thumb and forced the lamb to taste it. Boy rose from his knees,

shook his head and looked at Eliza expectantly. There was one other shepherd resort to teach a new lamb to drink—the heated vessel and spoon. But Boy acted as if the milk were nauseous. He did not let it trickle back from the corners of his mouth like a lamb who could not swallow, but put it out deliberately with his tongue. The shepherd began to talk of pre-natal indigestion. In despair Eliza carried her charge into the pen of another mother, one of the pure bred dames the lamb's grandfather had admired so much. Boy let out such a piteous wail that the shepherdess, frightened into forgetting the invariable silence of suffering sheep, set him hastily on the ground. The little ram immediately found his own way to his foster mother and Eliza, marveling, held the ewe about the neck while he satisfied himself.

It became a custom to take Boy among the flock three times a day for a change of diet. For the rest he was trusted to take his natural



share beside Girl. But it soon became evident the three meals a day that Eliza superintended were all Boy got. This was evinced by the fact that Welcome had more milk than Girl wanted, by the crushed marks on the lamb's fleece that refused to spring back after handling, and above all by his constant and patient outlook for Eliza. The shepherdess redoubled her efforts to find Boy more meals abroad. She even went to the length of giving some of Welcome's milk to the lamb of a pure Down ewe in order to arrange for a steady extra meal for Little Billy's grandson.

At home in his pen Boy left his mother and sister to their own devices while he pushed his face through the hurdle to watch for Eliza. When he grew a little bigger he took to jumping through a gap level with his nose. Often in the night Eliza would wake to the cry of Welcome announcing the fact that Boy had left his natural protection, and she invariably found him lying outside the pen of one of his foster mothers. The shepherdess, counting

the lamb too young to be on sheep-world alone, blocked the gap in the hurdle. Boy used his mother's back, as she was lying down, as a step towards clearing the fence. A little hole was made in Welcome's hurdle. Boy was taught its whereabouts by being shoved through it every night into safety. He always came out again promptly and never used it of his own accord. His persistence, the fact that he made friends easily and never effected an unlawful entrance into other pens, soon encouraged the shepherds to let Boy abide where he would.

When the culls were drafted from the Down ewes for the early spring market and their sorrowing mothers called for them in vain, Boy was on hand at each pen in turn with soft responses and ready to give material relief. A gentleness equal to that of his mountain grandsire endeared him to the bereaved dams and made lighter the work of the shepherds in handling them.

The lamb took no heed of his dam Wel-

come, though she often nosed him wistfully when the flock was let out to drink or to exercise. But at sight of Girl, Boy's sweet temper vanished. He was even known to hunt his twin up and pick a quarrel in the most passionate way by a head-to-head fight. When Girl's well-nourished indolence threatened to lose her the day, and Boy would not desist, his sister settled the matter by a foul hit. Boy made many friends outside his kin, and the pleasant relations established between the lamb and some of the Down ewes existed long after his weanling days. It was no uncommon sight to see one of his foster mothers standing with figure ducked and gently animated tail while the lamb affectionately trimmed up her fleece by cleverly selecting and gently pulling with his teeth the feathery sprays and untidy orts of the hay.

At the break of the winter, loads of corn stalks came up from Goshen. The roots being gone and the spring growths not established, they formed a cooling change from hay and

grain. At Goshen these stalks would have been cut up and fed in large troughs, but Michael fed extravagantly, tying up the great bundles to fences and hurdles where sheep could gather round. So he carpeted Little Siberia's hungry fields with the waste from Goshen. While the corn stalks were being fed, the lambs rushed before the rustle like scudding leaves before a storm. Only Boy stood his ground. Old Eph, clearing up between meals, with a lime pail in one hand, and a bunch of the more cumbersome stalks like fagots in the other, found occasion to commend the shepherds for the keeping of cross-bred foster lambs like Boy to settle the flock. Boy's keepers received Old Eph's certainty of the impurity of the lamb's strain with something like a mental jolt. Although they knew of it, they could not themselves perceive it. But it was only when Eliza was very tired and the shepherd most downcast that they feared the compelling influence of the Autocrat.

Eliza relieved her mind by advising the



stable hand to keep his eye on his horse which was hitched in the sheep yard to assist in clearing up. Eph's horse was aged, but he had his moments of pedigree pride and a great desire to emulate the lambs. Eliza had no sooner spoken than his head went up so high at their scutter and gambol that his tie rope snapped at a worn place. And even then the shepherds did not fear his spirit half so much as the cart behind him. All the little ones managed to skip safely away but Boy, and in standing his ground, as usual, the lamb was thrown and apparently crushed by the wheel. He lay quite still beside a brick. Eliza picked him up without hope, but seeing that he was alive, gave him oil in anticipation of internal injuries. With the lamb still in her arms, she sat down in one of the commonest arm chairs known to Little Siberia, a half barrel filled with straw, and the caressing expression of the things she would have liked to say in her grief the lamb drank in with his eyes to down the nausea of the slippery dose. But he mani-

fested no sign of distress from the accident either then or later. It was decided that the cart wheel must have bounced over the brick and thus saved the lamb from all injury except the natural mute fright of his kind.

The sheep were not shorn to meet the first inclemencies of a Little Siberian spring, but they went abroad early for a little while each day for a picking. Boy, lamb though he was, had a hospitable way of taking charge of their going and coming. Thus, at once a child and father of the flock, his old fearlessness of the outside fold developed into a fearlessness of the outside world. When the scope of his entertainment proved too meagre to satisfy his hospitable ambition for the flock, he did not hesitate to lead his sheep to forbidden pastures. The climax was reached one day when a stranger rode into the sheep yard to say that he had met a bunch of tame Down ewes headed by a beautiful cosset two miles up country.

Although Boy followed his shepherds back

home with a sweet accession to their wishes that pointed plainly to the injustice of an hereditary imagination, he was put in a pen. The fence was so high that he knew he could not jump it, nor did he try. Every day when the ewes went forth he got up expectantly to be let out, and every day lay down again in disappointment. The busy shepherdess passed and re-passed him evasively. And the cause of Eliza's evasion was not altogether because Little Siberia's wise shearing time had come, and the sheep, sore at being held back from the joys of the full-blossomed spring, matched wits with the shepherds' daily. Once Welcome looked in on her caged son good-naturedly, while Girl stood fond and free beside her. Though Boy had long forgotten and been forgotten of his dam, he was still at odds with his sister. But he could not reach her. Occasionally the farm help paused at his gate to say, "He is a cull." The flock, with their customary contempt for them that dwell apart, cuffed and jeered at him through his bars. If

Boy did not fight back, neither did he complain. And at last when Girl passed alone in her best spring coat he forgot the old bone of fraternal contention.

By furtive glances of which the lamb was not aware, the shepherdess was conscious that Boy's rich coloring was fading, his back taking on an ungracious curve, and his eyes growing heavy. He minced at his hay and only chewed his cud when the flock were at home, as if mechanically reminded by their example.

On the day that the boisterous sheep owner drove relentlessly into the yard Eliza paused for the doubtful consolation of a last look at the lamb. Boy raised his eyes obediently to the waiting figure, but a few days of neglect had wiped out months of care, and his primitive nature was insensible to the fluctuations of her human feeling. The finality of this alienation of her own upbuilding smote the shepherdess painfully. The lamb had acquired for her a new redeeming beauty. It was the beauty that always graces the going of them

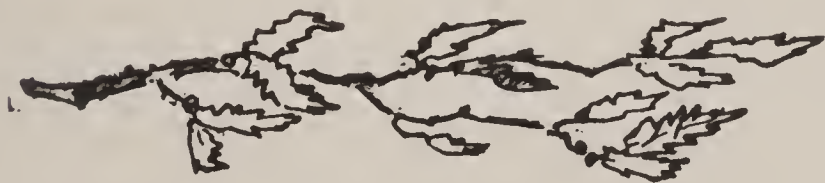


we have no power to stay: a souvenir of the departed which they never come back to mar.

The sheep owner and the shepherd walked up as Eliza turned away. The shepherd looked out on the ruined farm.

"No lamb was ever born in plenty," he said, "that could lead a sheep astray."

"And many an old shepherd has been deceived by the look of a lamb," said the Autocrat. "The twin sister now has a chance. She assimilates nutriment with characteristic Down promise."





## CHAPTER XVI

### THE AUTOCRAT'S BABY

THE Autocrat stood in the sheep yard waiting for the busy shepherd. It was so cold that a drop from his eye froze on his cheek and two drops from his nose iced his upper lip. And still it was warmer in that yard, enclosed to garner every ray of winter sun, than it was in the shadow of the sheds. But disturbed feelings like troubled sheep seek cover. The Autocrat did not wander into the sheep barns

out of the cold but away from his pursuing thoughts. He was a man of strong decisions. He prided himself on being a man of few words. He had used thirteen unnecessary words when he said, "Many an old shepherd has been deceived by the look of a lamb." Michael, at whom the remark had been thrown, had given no sign. It was through the medium of the sheep the Autocrat learnt that sheep-master sway is a weak thing beside shepherd love. There was not a sheep or lamb on Little Siberia which knew the Autocrat. His exile was colder than the cold. He had his flock philosophies about cold weather. He had felt the best happiness that exists in life for man or sheep come dancing out on the rays of a cold morning's sun. But the frigid temperature of inhospitality has no sunny side. His greatest joy, the possession of the sheep, had now become a doubtful happiness. He found in the flock an evasive intangible quality not commerciable and therefore not his. It was Michael's. It was Eliza's. It lived with

the shepherd and shepherdess after those they tended had met their ordained and their useful end. To the Autocrat the Spartan tragedy of the flock was wiped out by vigor. But only shepherd love could nourish that vigor which is to make the flocks go on.

"I must be getting old," said the Autocrat, and he stamped his foot to keep it alive. As he did this he was rather astonished to see a lamb stamp its foot at him as an intruder. It picked itself out in the shadow as a very young lamb indeed.

The Autocrat whipped out his handkerchief to wipe away another drop from his eye and to allay a suspicious stinging at his nose. And then his eyes being clearer and his nose more comfortable, he plainly saw the lamb stand on three legs to wipe its eye with a soft hind foot and fall over in the effort. Nothing daunted, it accomplished the feat while fallen with a dirty shoe from which the fringe of infant cartilage had yet to wear away.

It was not strange that a temperature that



could draw salt water from a strong man's eyes could bring tears to the eye of a lamb four hours old. "Feel the cold?" asked the Autocrat. "But your kind of a handkerchief's taboo." And he leaned over and used his own handkerchief on the lamb's eye.

It permitted this attention and then getting up skipped over to what might have been taken in its dark corner for a sheep disposed for dressing. Her hind legs were fastened far above comfortable pillowed height. Her head and shoulders were buried in the straw. The lamb, by way of warning, scratched peremptorily at the prone nose of its mother and then climbed up the hilly body and took milk from a height to which few lambs have to reach for their earliest sustenance.

The ewe was not dead. The hard weather had caused her too great earnestness in bearing a lamb. The shepherd, chief surgeon of them all, had passed through and done his rude best to save a fine young Shropshire; but a temperature that could bring salt water to a sheep

master's face had easily defeated the shepherd's mercy.

The Autocrat saw the condition of the ewe at a glance, and his interest in the lamb now closely resembled hate. Its tears, so lately comrade with his own, had not even the sentiment of near mourning. The man of strong decisions desired to end the ewe's misery. He blew a sharp peculiar whistle to summon aid. The lamb only came to attention. She turned her head, stared, returned, and renewed her demands on her mother.

The Autocrat thought that such a heartless lamb could live a week on its own initiative and he at once understood the absence of Eliza. So intent did he become on distracting the little thing's attention from its dam that he pursed his lips and whistled an emphatic tune. Comforted and strengthened by the fruits of her climb the lamb came prancing at him sidewise. The Autocrat ignored its unseasonable gambols. The lamb which had not left its mother of its own accord went back to

her. Incensed against his reason, the Autocrat advanced and scraped the lamb gently away with the toe of his rubber boot. The lamb rolled easily down the body of its mother, got up, looked at the intruding foot, and then replied with high curvets and leaps and a new scaling of its dam. Some dams teach their lambs greater appetite by pretended rough denial. This lamb responded naturally to such teaching. But to the Autocrat its gestures spelt nothing more charming than heartless impertinence.

Clumsy with cold, awaiting the shepherd, he stood helpless in the dark corner bearing the lamb unwilling company. The blind walls of the shed faced the bitter northwest, thin walls to shelter such an earnest ewe from the bleakest aspect in all his domain. For years he had permitted Eliza to patch the cracks with burlap and overlooked the shepherd's extravagance with straw. Straw bedding nursed crops, but cases like this ewe's were not common enough to warrant new shed

walls. He looked at her sagging shoulders crushed down in the straw, at her limp forelegs, at her head turned chin upwards. The sharp end of a straw was entering one eye. The Autocrat stooped and remedied this trifling irritation. The lamb, accustomed by instinct of the priority of infancy to hold place in any reasonable attendants' mind, had followed him up and was butting its soft muzzle against his hand while he removed the straw from its mother's eye.

When the shepherd came at last and Old Eph dragged the ewe away the lamb backed up nimbly in front of its dam's nose as if to impede a journey which was to leave it lonely. The ewe smelt out her offspring and licked it as she passed. A sudden revulsion of feeling re-established the heartless lamb in the Autocrat's heart as he fell a prey to a foolish shepherd fancy that a sheep had commended her lamb to his care. He adopted the baby ewe.

Eliza was not enthusiastic. The shepherd was neutral. Both had always known, how-



ever, that if any breed could touch the Autocrat's heart it was the Shropshires. Their lambs did not reach Eliza's greatest tenderness. They so reminded her, she said, with their eyes buried deep in their broad full-fleeced polls, of little well-doing pigs.

The lamb was called the Autocrat's baby. She was taken into the shepherd's hut there to put through the various ailments that attack even the domestic sheep when they are humanly domesticated. She grew but slowly, though she retained the same cheerful initiative about sheeply inconveniences that had once so unjustly contributed to the feeling that she was a heartless lamb. At no time was there any of that young pathos about her which would have made a tender nurse of Eliza. The practical attitude of the lamb satisfied the sheep master. Now that the first rub of his sympathy for the mother had worn down, he was rather pleased to have the lamb in league with him and carrying easily his new sentiments for lambs and ewes. The lamb fared

as well as foster lambs may fare. For everybody except the shepherds there hung about her the halo of the Autocrat's fancy. And the fancy of an unfanciful man is apt to be a solid fancy.

When the lamb went around the shepherd's hut scratching its eye with its hoof, Rube would borrow a dime ostensibly to measure just enough zinc sulphate to make a wash for the inflamed orb. Though he never met with great success treating it, he showed his loyalty. Eliza dosed the lamb with internal diaphoretics. The Autocrat himself learnt to administer such common stimulants as tincture of rhubarb and black pepper. He never failed to whistle a tune afterwards for the lamb to caper by. And for this Old Eph dutifully kept his laughter. The businesslike ballet, as executed by the Autocrat's baby, was not without a grave spontaneous grace all its own.

By grazing time the lamb carried an exterior of some importance, if she was undersized. Eliza believed that she had in some

queer manner communicated to the rest of the flock the fact that she belonged by selection to that being who held all their lives in his hands. Certain it was that the flock gave her space at pasture, and certain it was that she did not sigh for the sheep. Indeed, it was very hard work to get her to leave the cabin in the morning in time to use the flock for a guide. . And it became customary to hear Rube and Old Eph chaff each other alternately with this reminder: "I believe it's your turn to shove the Autocrat's baby out to pasture." For the heartless lamb, however unsociable towards the flock, could be permitted to miss nothing of sheeply routine. And after she fully realized the benefits of grazing and the joy of the air, she became as precocious in outdoor pursuits as she had been indoors.

At twelvemonths she had a lamb. The Autocrat had been on hand every day for a week in expectation of the event. When it became certain that the little ewe stood in need of surgical aid, Michael was called in. He, in

his simplicity, being too full of the importance of the case, grew nervous in his skill. Both dam and young were lost.

The unsuccessful surgeon carried the news of his failure to the sheep master. He was surprised to hear him say: "Once in a while a man has to prove his own theories by his own mistakes, as well as the mistakes of others."

It was to Eliza the Autocrat said, "I shall be quite lonely until it comes my way to take to another lamb."







## CHAPTER XVII

### THE SEASON'S ROUND

THE northwest corner of Little Siberia is pleasant at this time of year. Sly breezes apologize for the coming sun. Nothing desecrates the quiet of our northern woodland. The haunts of men outline but slowly the hazy west. Their distant awakening does not disturb my dreams. For a few spell-like moments the flock live for me and I for them. The squirrel and the rabbit come among us unafraid. From the home valley the plow-

man lends us his cheerful morning note. For the dark woods that shut away the blessed sun are down, and we plow, we sow and we reap as they reap at Goshen.

The morning wears to noon. Karl's tongue becomes rough and dry. His oxen stumble. The late May lambs come up to me under the shade of the big pine—Ebony, sedate and serious like her mother, and Bonnybuck, all gay. Young Chamomile raises her winsome face, and Fairy Foot rests her chin in my palm to ruminate contentedly. Friendly Face licks my hand as she stands beside me looking out to the west. The vista touches her imagination too, and Friendly Face is sure she sees luscious crops within easy reach of her fleet hoofs. But because I do not see them, Friendly Face assures me that she will not seek them.

A man can be heard sorting stone in a distant hedge. Various and unwelcome noises float up from the busy west. Other members of the flock, as the heat of the day or a satisfied

appetite leads them, muster round. Chocolate, the Touch-me-not, stands on the outermost edge. She freely enjoys my company, but she never has given me hers.

All at once the leader's voice breaks forth, and we face south with one accord. The sheep come down in an unbroken overlapping line, heads, necks and hearts reaching for home.

The sweat of the noon heat is like a disease in the blood. Occasionally a full-fleeced lamb, remembering the comfort of infancy, breaks line to nose at the udder of some ewe, who is herself thinking eagerly of the salt tonic, the refreshing water, and the siesta in the home shade.

As the hot midsummer progresses, Eliza, the shepherdess, encourages the flock to hug shelter in the daytime. At night they make up for the lack of grazing by cosy suppers in the sheds and barns. For summer's heat is more devastating to sheep than winter's cold. Their appetites are keen when the sun goes down and the flies are asleep and the lantern light glim-

mers hospitably under their roof. They surge about their shepherds in their eagerness for food. Rosebud bites through the frayed rope that holds the gate of her pen and bursts away from the food just apportioned her, while foolish little Naomi clambers up the barn wall after the mere reflection of fodder.

The great heat passes like a bad dream, and again it is the beautiful sheep month of September. I watch bright suns on shimmering grass and prosperous woolly backs. My focussed eyes bring earth and sky together in a blend of color while I drink my fill of the good weather. The flock go out to pasture at a gallop, the forward flank turning short to meet the rear in a battle of heads. Again I see the great ram heading for me in the distance. The coming collision, gathering force as he nears, paralyzes me into sudden cowardice. I turn the head of the fond baby buck as he stands beside me. He bristles with brave anger and meets the terror and pride of the flock head to head. The virility that appro-



priates the challenge of danger blinds him to my injustice. But his forehead aches and he turns to me now for sympathy. I bend my face to his and in that moment I am hurt the most.

But little recks the great ram, Othello II. The boisterous wind is exposing the nude side of the leaf. Legs in pairs take Highland flings, tails lose all sense of demureness, lambs bounce, grown sheep fling themselves bodily into air to drop to earth with incredible lightness, while the entire army, never disbanding, rips right on to the confines of their pasture and back again. This is the month when sheep take stone walls and fences in preference to the beaten paths, tumbling over easily in most unexpected places. The madness of the first cool days is on them. Old ewes skip till their breath comes scant, and shepherds watch for the advances of the modest ones, patiently following the parent of the flock.

When the gamboling days are over, they settle down to the sweet wind-freshened pas-

ture; for Little Siberia at last is blossoming as the rose. Some of the flock, nose to nose, hunt grass and clover, others walk alone, resenting with a sidelong brush of the head any trespass on their selection; all move in search of that particular food their appetite craves, vaguely aware, now the fun is over, that this change of season has its serious side. Despite her vaunting attitude of a few days back, the shadow of a flying bird is enough to startle a lamb to my knee. Sheep who felt no scare a month ago shy off now at the jump of a rabbit. Meditative ewes poke their noses into Eliza's hand and lay up capital in her bank of favors for the coming winter. If the brilliant sunshine be overshadowed for a minute, youngsters tug like puppies at her dress. Even Chocolate accepts a pat on the head, but regards all further manifestations as suspicious. In the minds of untamed sheep, as in the minds of all wild things, one fear is the mother of all fear—it is the fear of being caught.

November finds the flock too alert to be rest-

ful. The temperature continues to fall. The wind holds surprises and the sunshine is fickle. The sheep become more and more industrious and clever at pasture. They twist head to tail to reach succulent bits their feet might spoil. They crane for the wild apple and cherry, catch the boughs in their mouths, clamber up and hold them down, and strip them leaf by leaf. If by any chance the bough be too elastic, they make the next reach certain by breaking it off with their sharp back teeth. Even the tops of the seeded birch, felled for firewood, meet the fancy of some in the sharp winds of autumn, and the needles of the pine are occasionally eaten—the medicinal doses of natural turpentine correcting the ravages of the internal parasite. Lambs chase the scudding leaves, dash at them, miss them and cry back to Eliza to check the wind. The season of indoor feeding is well-nigh begun.

In the sheep fold all fear of the dearth of the winter leaves them. They have watched all summer great crops of clover and grass, of

oats and cow peas, of millet and alfalfa, drawn into shelter. They have seen load after load of the succulent rutabaga deposited in safe storage. Little Siberia has at last yeaned them great harvests. Three times a day will plenty be apportioned them till summer comes again, and they can eat and ruminate and sleep and patiently await the coming of their young.

Sicomac is nonchalantly happy with her chin propped on the lattice of the gate chewing her cud. The dejected attitude of the wind-bowed saplings is naught to her. They are outside the fold, and she within is waiting for her shepherd. Brownie Boy is on his flank, fast asleep in his perfect security. Young Chamomile has her back propped against a half barrel, her legs and tail in perfect abandon. Narcissus, couched and attentive, is peacefully ruminating. For since the passing of Master, the sheep fold has been made more sheltered and unobtrusive, away from the haunt of the tramp dog, and night and day within Shepherd Michael's hail.



The Bit-ba's note rings out like the challenging trill of a prima donna. She sees the shepherd coming and swings her feathery tail in excitement. The brown-faced Kiddy shakes her head with mischievous glee and bucks her twin sister Elizabeth, to wake her up to the great event. Brownie yawns, gets up and rubs his woolly head against the shepherd's leg. Greyhampton looks up in his face and says, "B-b-wha." They cannot see on Michael's face the wear of weather and necessity. He takes their young and breaks their hearts. He lets their life blood out. But he has never refused them the fold or failed to provide.

They do not know Eliza's hair is growing scant. She pours down their throats the nauseous drug. She pares their hoofs until they bleed and dips them in the burning antiseptic. She delivers them over to the knife. But she feeds them as lambs, and as sheep she does not desert them.

They dip their heads in the troughs of bran

and babble sweet nothings like the music they sang to their dams at suckling time. Sicomac still seeks to oust poor Chrissy. But Chrissy's big appealing eyes are never turned on Eliza in vain. Desdemona is at her elbow saying "Ma-e!" Rosebud's "My-y-ow," sounds beside Rosemary's "B-b-l, B-b-l." Brown Sister speaks in the tone that she'll use to her lamb, a note of pain and ecstasy in one. The beetle-browed Infanta frowns love, while squinting Kiddy turns her adoring glance on her own nose. The foolish Wish-It will not be confined until her share is ready, but bursts open her gate, and the waiting Naomi rushes into the vacated place. A poor little two-year-old is nosing at Sicomac's udder, a protest for food, a gesture from babyhood. Sicomac does not want it all, but Sicomac loves to corner it all. She gives way to her shepherdess, and looking up in her face says sweetly, "Bab-bab!" This remark never fails to elicit one in Belladonna's ventriloquial tenor which makes us all start and look towards the hills.

At noon Rube, the woodman, finds time to trim and grind turnips, and Old Eph, the stable hand, carries them out in great baskets for Eliza and the shepherd to feed. At night the hay racks are supplied with enough fodder to keep the herd happy till another day. By the time the day's feeding is over the big ram in his pen in the moonlight looks like a caricature, the great form of Mallard plays tricks with my eyes, and the noses of the sheep are long, outdrawn by their own shadows. Temporary screens are dropped north and east of the sheds; for snow is expected ere the morn. The flock is put to bed.

In its nightly satisfaction is my own thanksgiving. Wherever the stern Autocrat may send us next Little Siberia is regenerate and every day is Sunday for the sheep. Wrapped in the quiet of their Sabbath, I see their pain without impatience, and feel their fear unafraid.

(THE END)





















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